Comune di Padova

Padova
Urbs picta

Giotto’s Scrovegni Chapel
and Padua’s fourteenth-century fresco cycles

Nomination Format

2 DESCRIPTION

2.a Description of Property

Introduction

The site covered by the 'Padova *Urbs picta*' nomination is a serial one in that it comprises the fourteenth-century fresco cycles to be found in eight different buildings or complexes of buildings spread around Padua's old city centre. These are grouped into four different component parts within an area that, in the fourteenth century, corresponded to the entire inhabited space within the city walls. Those four component parts are: *(1) Scrovegni Chapel and the Church of the Eremitani; (2) Palazzo della Ragione, Carraresi Palace, Baptistery and associated Piazzas; (3) Buildings associated with the Basilica of St. Anthony; (4) San Michele.*

Overall, this complex of historic monuments is known throughout the world and stands in a region where the tradition of wall frescoes dates back to the tenth century but would undergo extraordinary development during the course of the fourteenth century. Giotto's presence in the city around 1302 marks the beginning of a period of remarkable cultural and artistic achievements, which would continue throughout the century and produce frescoes of rare quality.

Giotto, Guariento, Giusto de' Menabuoi, Altichiero da Zevio, Jacopo Avanzi and Jacopo da Verona would all play a leading role in these achievements. Working for illustrious local families, the clergy, the city commune and the Carraresi court, these artists would decorate the interiors of religious and civic buildings (both public and private), producing works that would alter the way the city was perceived. Today, these fresco cycles can still be visited within their original buildings. And even though they are the work of different artists commissioned by different patrons to adorn structures of different character, these frescoes form a single narrative that reflects their shared origin in the art of Giotto. Each cycle is a personal interpretation of the artistic language developed by that master, and as such makes an exceptional contribution to the whole.

Geographical Context

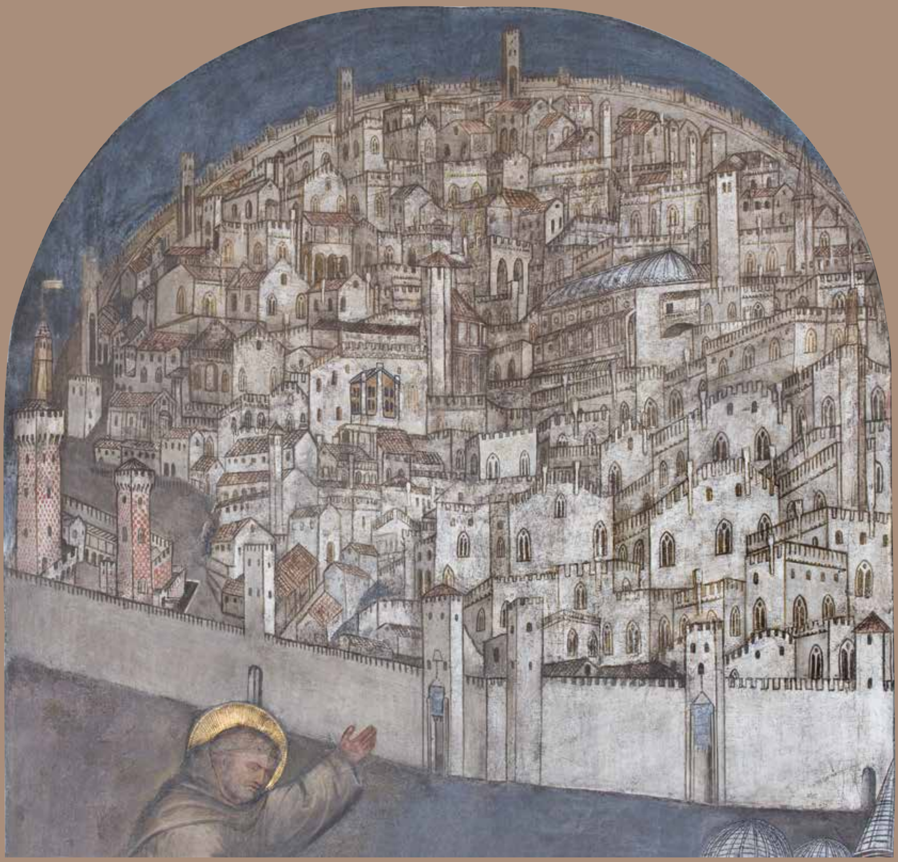
Located in Italy, within the region of the Veneto, the city of Padua stands at the eastern end of the Po Valley, some 10 km north of the Euganean Hills and around 20 km west of the Venetian Lagoon. The city itself extends over an area of 92 km^2, which is entirely flat and cut across by the numerous watercourses which over the centuries have both determined the layout of the city and provided a form of protection. The terrain itself is made up of fine clay and sands, with only rare deposits of gravelly sediment. Due to the repeated changes in the course of its rivers over the most recent geological era, there is also great irregularity in the distribution of the various strata within that terrain. And in rural areas to the west of the city there are clear traces of the palaeochannels of the river Brenta.

The city emerged and developed within the hydrographical network formed by the rivers Brenta and Bacchiglione; these waterways would continue to affect the layout of the urban fabric and still offer very atmospheric views in numerous parts of Padua. The group site that is covered by the nomination lies entirely within the old sixteenth-century city walls, which enclose an area of 530 hectares.

The distribution of the four component parts within that area is as follows: (1) the Scrovegni Chapel and the Church of the Eremitani are located to the north; (2) Palazzo della Ragione, the Carraresi Palace and the Cathedral Baptistery with associated Piazzas, are located around the centre; (3) the buildings associated with the Basilica of St. Anthony are located to the south west; (4) the Oratory of St. Michael is located to the south-east. Thus situated, these four component parts cover the entire urban area of fourteenth-century Padua.

View of Padua in 1382

Some of the buildings which house the fresco cycles are recognizable in this, one of the very first depictions of the centre of the city, painted by Giusto de' Menabuoi as part of the frescos in the Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi within the Basilica of St. Anthony. One can make out: the Palazzo della Ragione and the Basilica of St. Anthony, their lead-sheet roofing shown in a bluish-grey; the chequerboard white-and-red walls of the Carraresi Castle, whose surviving Chapel now houses the Accademia Galileiana di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti. All three of these buildings are included in the nomination.

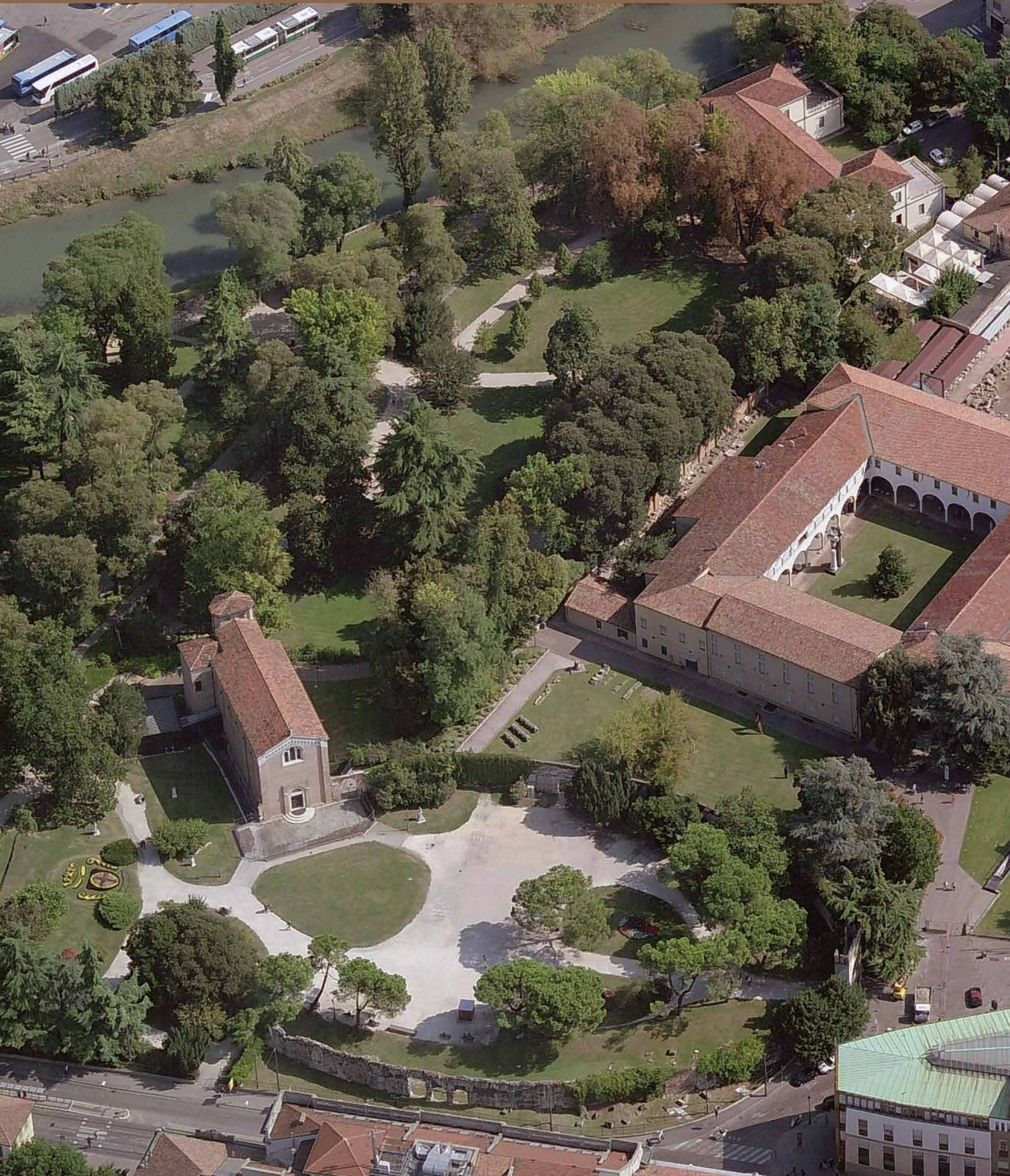


Ill. 1, Giusto de' Menabuoi, *Blessed Luca Belludi receives from St. Anthony the announcement of the Liberation of the City of Padua*, Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi, Basilica of St. Anthony (detail)

Chapter 2

2.a.1

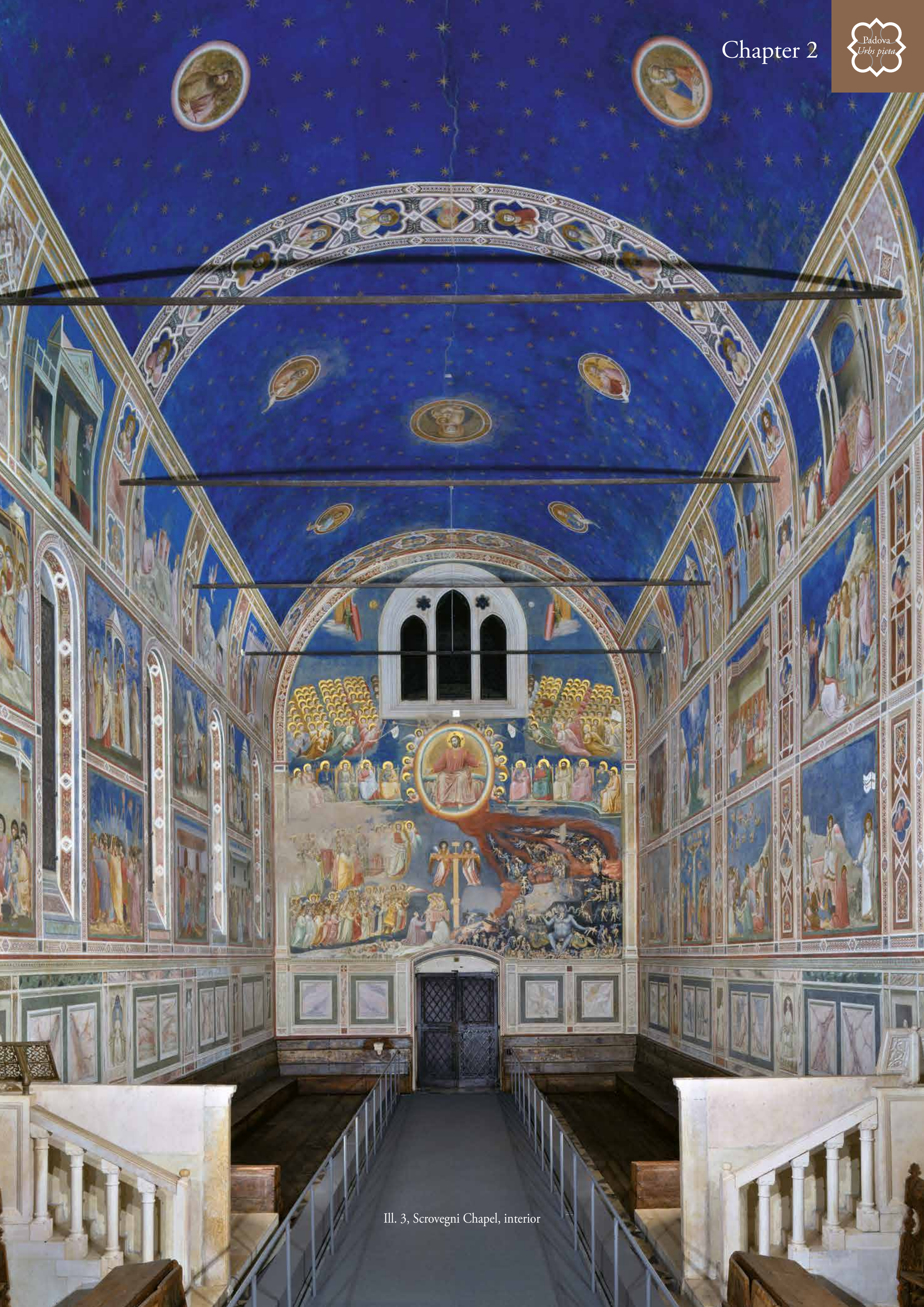
Scrovegni and Eremitani



Chapter 2

Scrovegni Chapel

Ill. 2, Scrovegni Chapel, exterior



Ill. 3, Scrovegni Chapel, interior

2.a.1 Scrovegni Chapel

Description of the Building

The Scrovegni Chapel stands on a site where one can still see remains of the Roman amphitheatre (known as l'Arena). In fact, various elements of that ancient structure are used by the building: the gabled façade rests on the outline of the amphitheatre's external elliptical wall, and the side walls of the chapel seem to be traced along the radial walls that were part of it.

The exterior of the chapel is in bare brickwork and is crowned with a coping formed of small projecting arches. The single-gabled façade has a three-light window in stone and the doorway is decorated with splayed arches in stone and brick. Along the side walls there are pilaster strips, which on the south wall frame tall single-light windows.

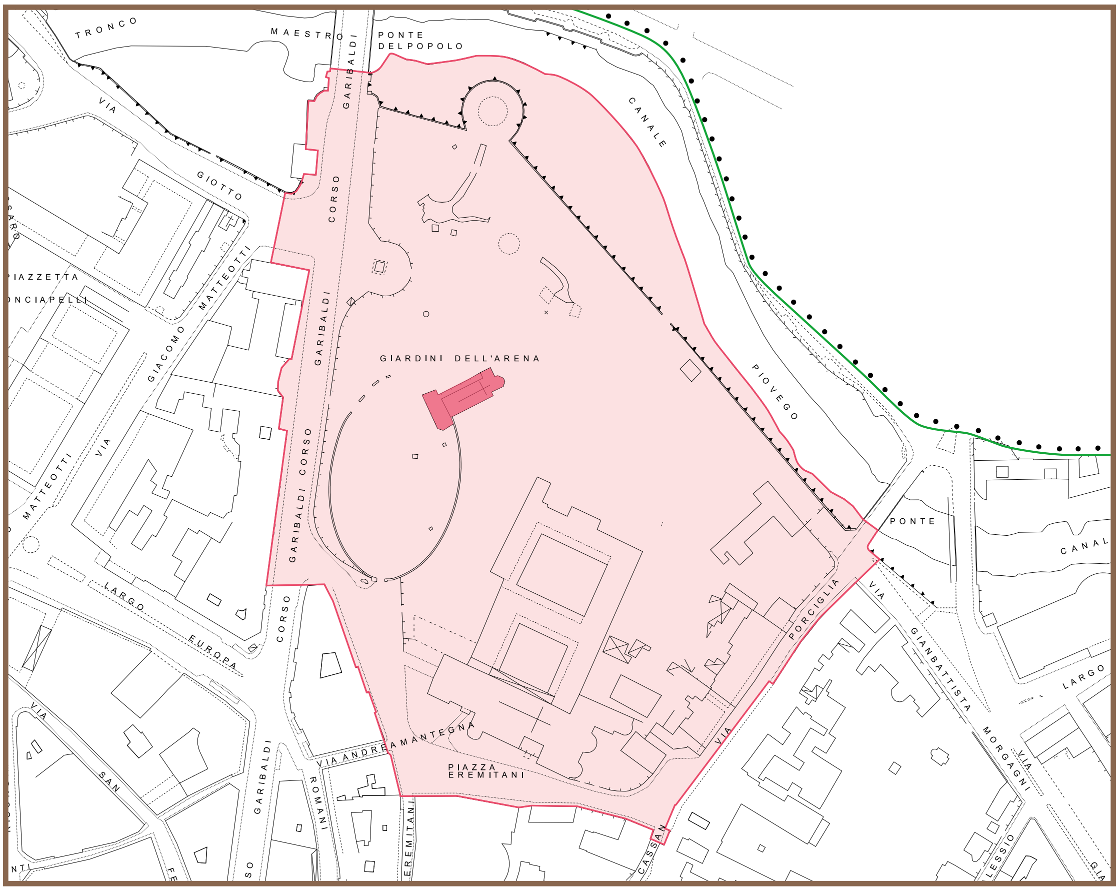
The internal layout of the chapel consists of a single nave which ends at the east wall in a small presbytery with a polygonal apse. On the north wall of that presbytery is a small square room, which is used as a sacristy and is surmounted by a loggia (now bricked in). Below the nave is a crypt (also known as the *coenobium*), access to which is from outside the building by means of a stone staircase. There is also a space above the apse.

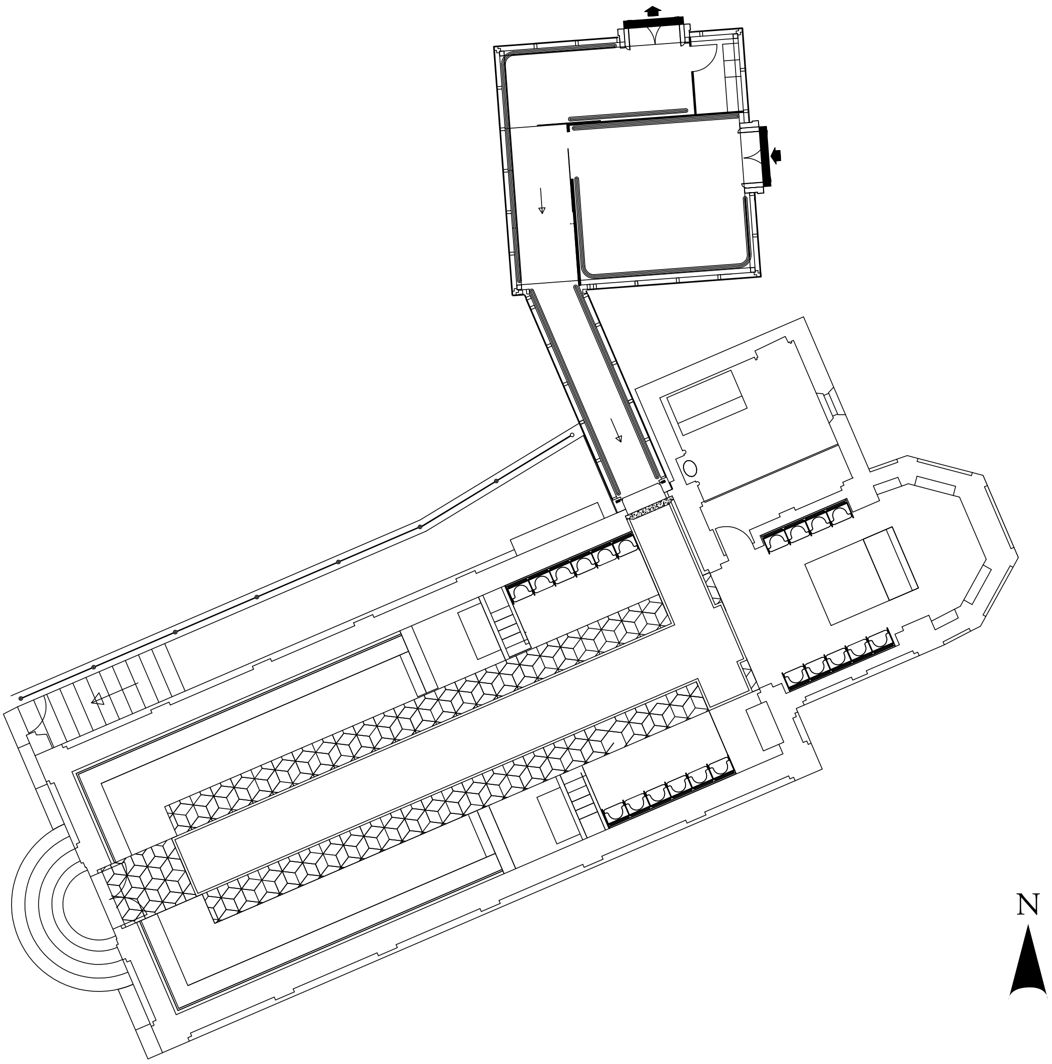
The nave is covered by a barrel vault, whilst the altar space has ribbed vaulting and the bowl-shaped vault over the apse has rib-defined triangular segments. The interior is entirely decorated with frescoes, the architectural layout and pictorial cycles forming such a coherent whole that it may be the case that Giotto also played a part in the design of the building itself.

Description of the Fresco Cycle

Giotto's fresco masterpiece at the Scrovegni Chapel is the world's best preserved example of his work in this medium, as well as being the highest expression of his creative genius. The cycle of works here provided a model that was innovative both in its account of pictorial space - the frescoes contain the first revolutionary uses of spatial perspective - and in its rendition of human emotions. It is also the only example of a fresco cycle that was a secular commission from an individual city burgher.

Extending over the entire wall space of the interior, the cycle comprises: 39 scenes from the *Life of the Virgin* and the *Life of Christ*, occupying the side walls and the arched space of the east wall; 14 figures depicting *Vices* and *Virtues*, along the dado of the side walls; two small choir balconies, painted to the sides of arched opening in east wall; and a majestic *Last Judgement* on the west wall. The decorative scheme also includes the vault, which is painted with a star-strewn sky across which arch three decorative bands with 10, large and small, tondi containing figures.


TRONCO
MAESTRO
PONTE DELPOPOLO
GARIBALDI
VIA GIOTTO
CORSO
PIAZZETTA
MATTEOTTI
GIACOMO
VIA
GARIBALDI
GIARDINI DELL'ARENA
CANALE
PIOVEGO
CORSO
GARIBALDI
MATTEOTTI
LARGO
EUROPA
CORSO
PONTE
CANAL
VIA
PORCIGLIA
VIA
GIANBATTISTA
MORGAGNI
VIA
LARGO
VIA ANDREA MANTEGNA
PIAZZA EREMITANI
VIA
SAN
GARIBALDI
ROMANI
EREMITANI
CASSAN
LESSIO


N

Plan of the Fresco Cycle in the Scrovegni Chapel

Legend

1 *The Father God*

Life of the Virgin

2 *Joachim driven out of the Temple*
3 *Joachim meets the Shepherds*
4 *The Annunciation to St. Anne*
5 *Joachim's Votive Sacrifice*
6 *Joachim's Dream*
7 *The Meeting at the Golden Gate*
8 *The Birth of the Virgin*
9 *The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*
10 *The Suitors present their branches*
11 *Joseph and the Young Men pray in the Temple*
12 *The Marriage of Mary and Joseph*
13 *Mary's Wedding Procession*
14 *a-b The Annunciation*
15 *The Visitation*

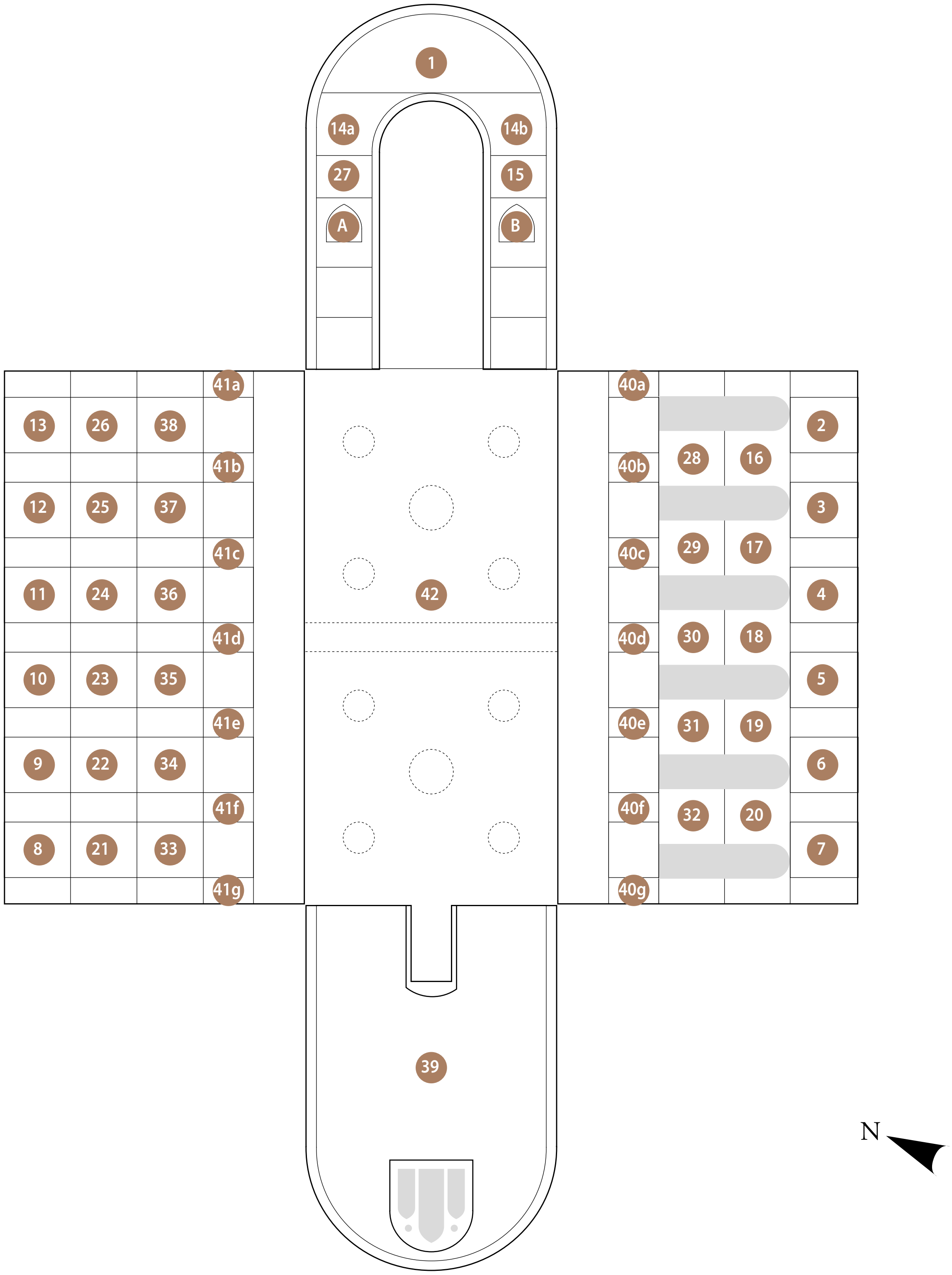
Life of Christ

16 *The Nativity*
17 *The Adoration of the Magi*
18 *The Presentation of Christ in the Temple*
19 *The Flight into Egypt*
20 *The Massacre of the Innocents*
21 *Christ among the Doctors in the Temple*
22 *The Baptism of Christ*
23 *The Marriage Feast of Cana*
24 *The Resurrection of Lazarus*
25 *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem*
26 *Christ drives the Money-Changers from the Temple*
27 *The Kiss of Judas*
28 *The Last Supper*
29 *Christ Washes His Disciples' Feet*
30 *The Capture of Christ*
31 *Christ before Anna and Caiaphas*
32 *The Mocking of Christ*
33 *Christ carrying the Cross*
34 *The Crucifixion*
35 *The Lament over the Dead Christ*
36 *Noli me tangere. The Resurrection of Christ*
37 *The Ascension*
38 *Pentecost*

39 *The Last Judgement*
40 a-g *Virtues*
41 a-g *Vices*
A-B *Choir Balconies*
42 *Starred vault with decorative bands and tondi containing figures*

The innovation in Giotto's rendition of pictorial space is clear when one looks at how the gospel story unfolds along the walls, with each episode contained within a painted architectural framework.

The entire narrative is laid out over three levels, the story beginning in the south-east corner of the interior and then spiralling clockwise around the building; as one can see from the numbered sequence in the legend of the cycle, that narration also runs across the space of the wall at the east end of the nave. As for the dado, that too is divided into panels, with a narrative sequence that


1
14a
14b
27
15
A
B
41a
40a
13
26
38
2
41b
40b
28
16
12
25
37
3
41c
40c
29
17
11
24
36
42
4
41d
40d
30
18
10
23
35
5
41e
40e
31
19
9
22
34
6
41f
40f
32
20
8
21
33
7
41g
40g
39
N

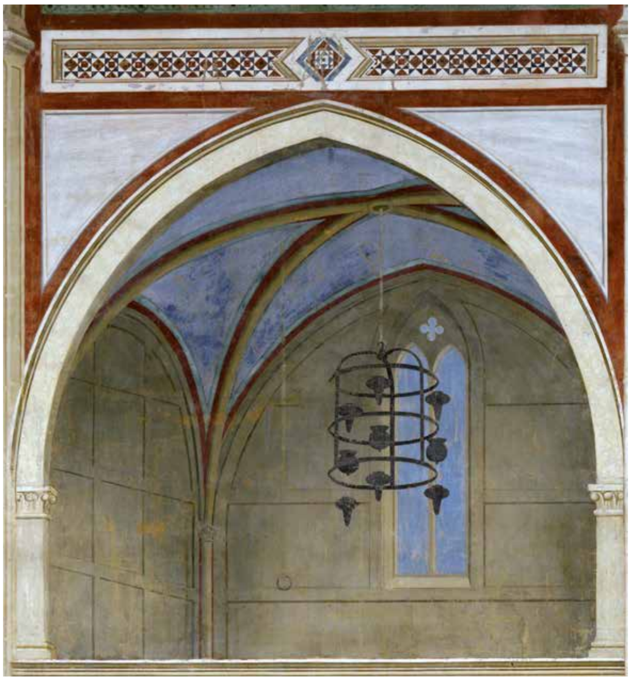
leads the faithful, both physically and spiritually, around to the *Last Judgement* depicted on the counter-facade of the west wall: following the *Virtues*, one comes to Paradise, depicted lower left; following the *Vices* one comes to Hell, depicted lower right.

Although the *Last Judgement* is not, like the other walls, divided by painted architectural features, it is still reveals a geometrical organisation of pictorial space. On the areas of the nave's east wall to either side of the arch opening through to the presbytery, Giotto painted two features that were totally new to the art of the day: the *trompe-l'oeil* architecture of two choir balconies (the so-called *coretti*). Empty rib-vaulted spaces which contain no figures, these allowed the artist to demonstrate to the full his skill in the rendering of three-dimensional space.

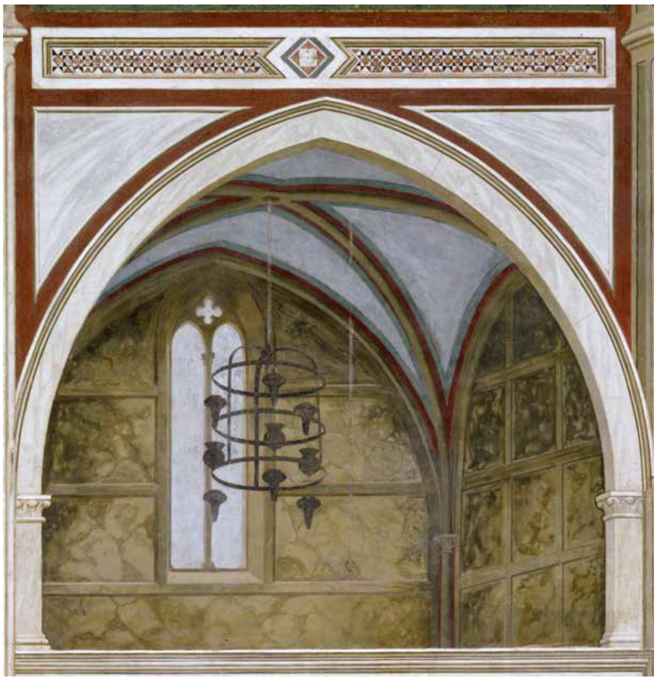
To a certain extent, Giotto's mastery of perspective is still intuitive and empirical. However, there is no doubt that it was only in his work in Padua that the artist fully worked out his handling of space - that same handling which he demonstrates in the numerous depictions of buildings which feature in the episodes that make up the fresco cycle. For the first time, the Florentine artist organised perspective space within a rationally conceived architectural framework, which defines and links the episodes in a narrative sequence. The overall layout also serves to establish parallels and correspondences between episodes in the *Life of the Virgin* and those in the *Life of Christ* that figure on opposite walls of the nave.

Another important feature to mention when describing the fresco cycle is the artist's choice of palette. By opting for lighter and more luminous pastel colours, Giotto was able to achieve the gentle chromatic shifts that were very effective in creating the effect of natural light; even shadows, for example, are not rendered as patches of darkness but rather by muting colour tone.

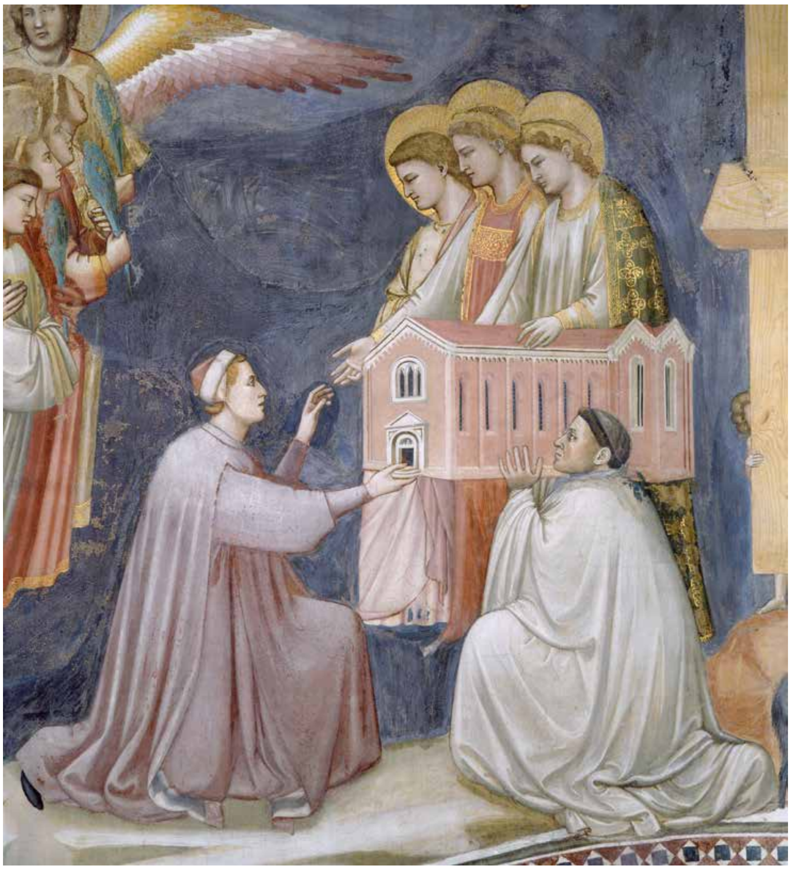
The Scrovegni Chapel cycle was also innovative as an example of a new type of commission, from a secular figure who was not a ruling lord but a city burgher. The patron here was the banker Enrico Scrovegni; depicted in the *Last Judgement* below the figure of Christ, he is shown kneeling at the foot of the Cross in an act of devotion to the Madonna, to whom he is presenting a model of the chapel itself. The choice of scale here is another innovation: Scrovegni is



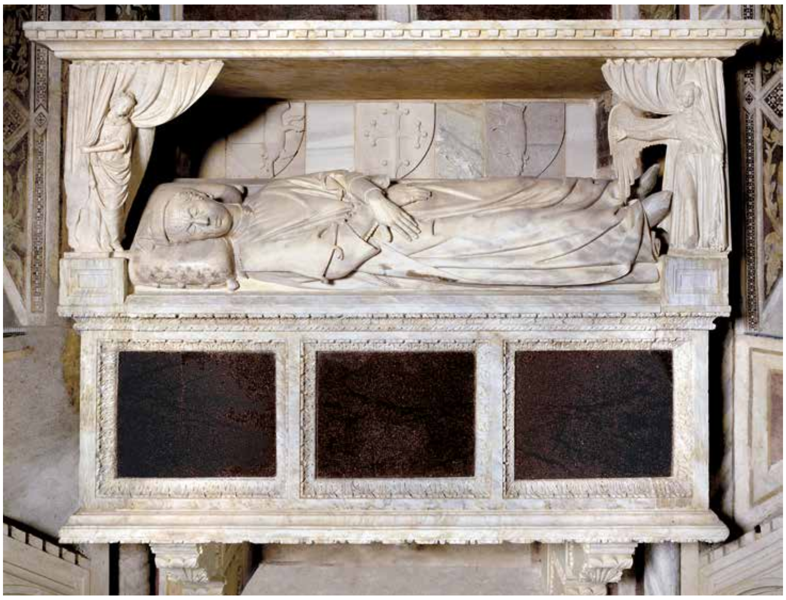
Ill. 4a, Giotto, *Choir Balcony*, Scrovegni Chapel



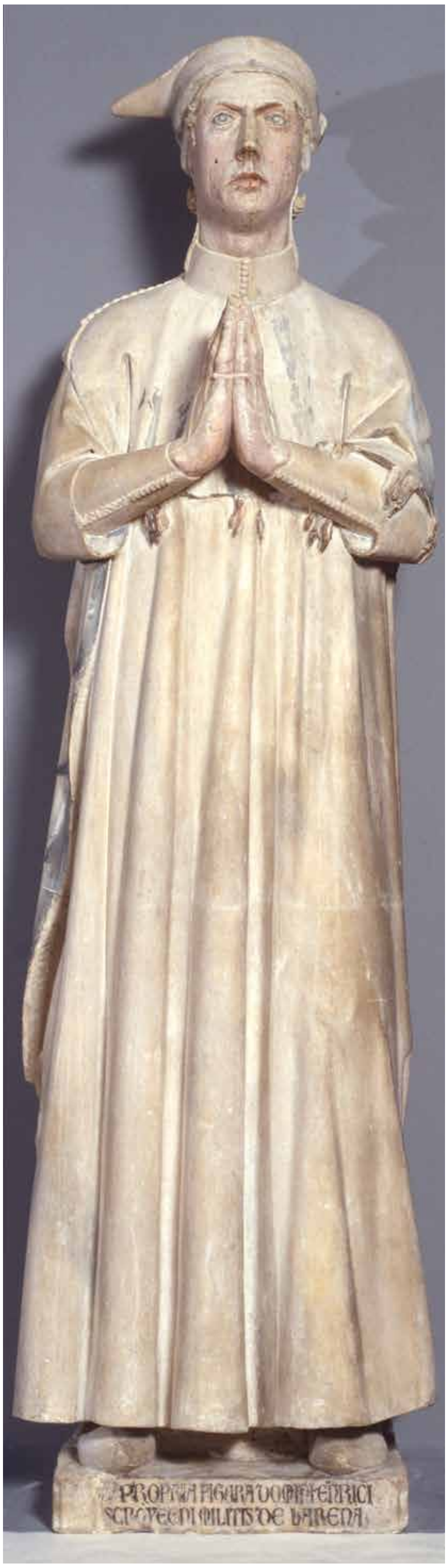
Ill. 4b, Giotto, *Choir Balcony,* Scrovegni Chapel not only depicted in Paradise, but he is also of the same size as the Madonna and the other saints, thus the ‘donor’ is no longer a marginal figure (as had been the case in the past) but takes on a central role in the scene depicted. And the significance of this is not restricted to the visual narrative: by having himself depicted within Paradise, Enrico Scrovegni wanted to portray himself



Ill. 5, Giotto, *The Last Judgement,* Scrovegni Chapel (detail of Enrico Scrovegni offering the model of the chapel to the Virgin Mary)

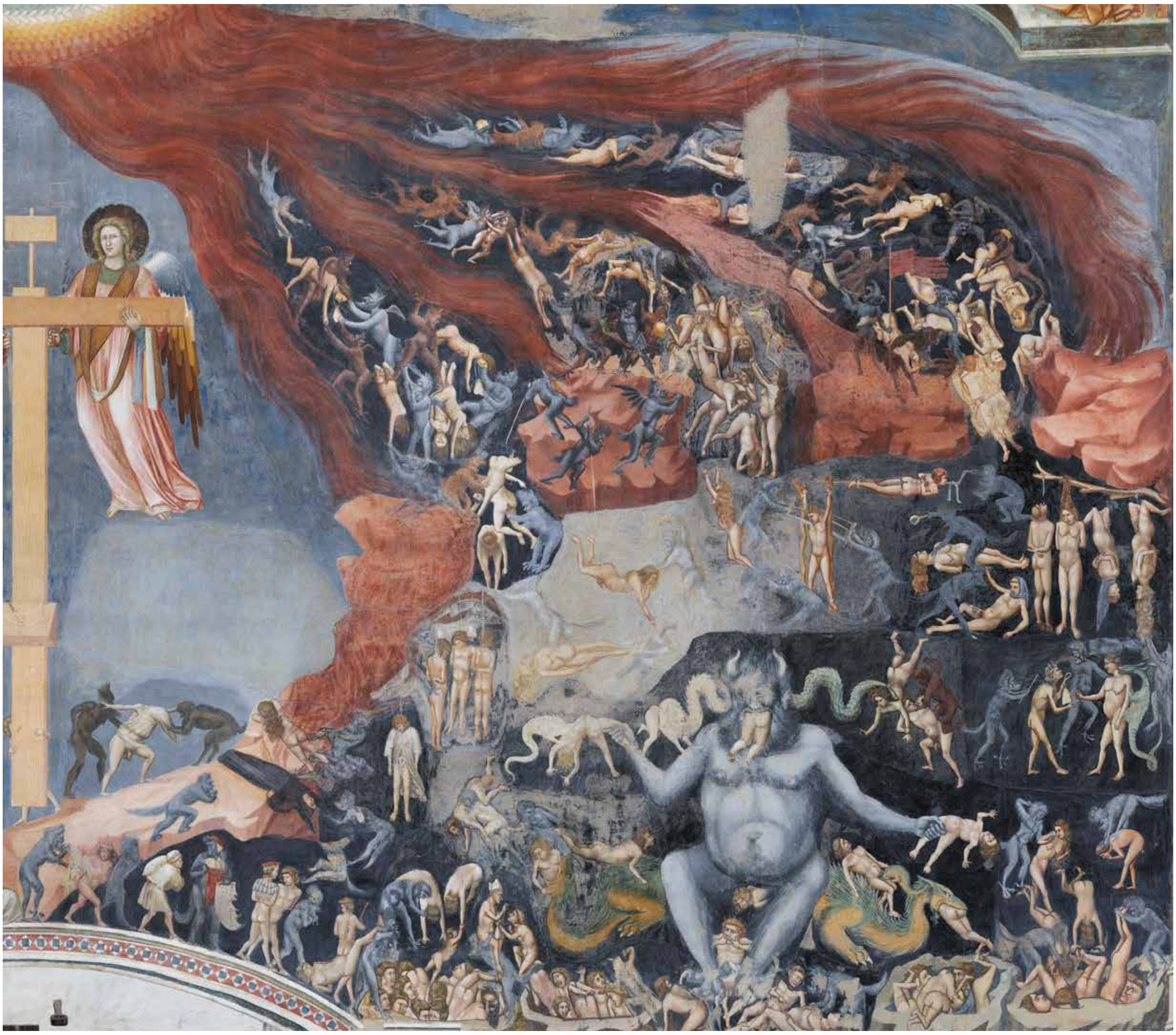


Ill. 6, Master of the Castellano Salomone Tomb, Tomb of Enrico Scrovegni, marble with traces of polychrome, Scrovegni Chapel

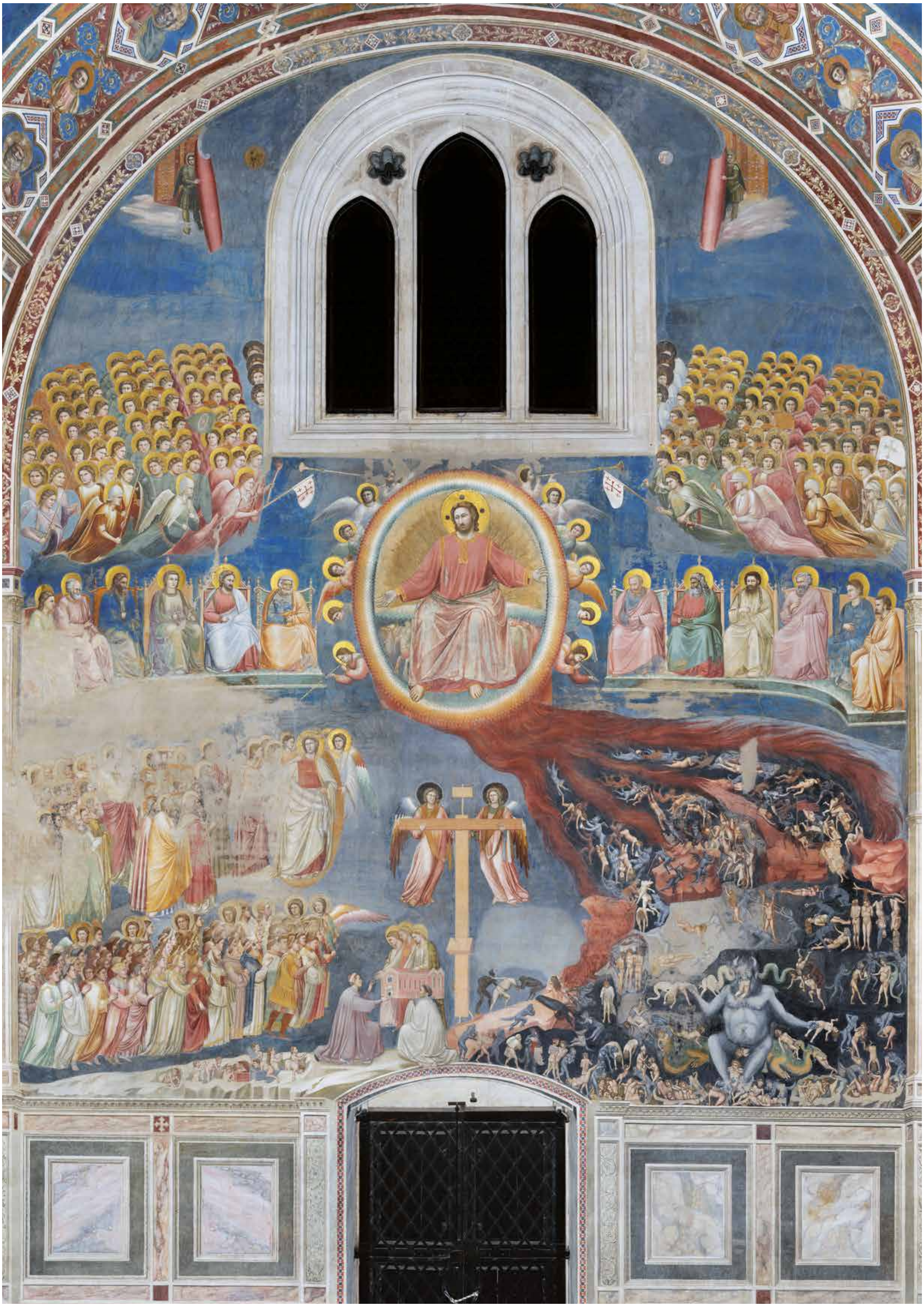


Ill. 7, Marco Romano, *Enrico Scrovegni at Prayer*, marble with traces of polychrome, Scrovegni Chapel as one of the Just, as a figure who could play a role in the city's future fortunes. Scrovegni's standing as new type of artistic patron is further underlined by the fact that there are two more depictions of him within the chapel: in a statue which shows him at prayer, and in the sculpted figure lying atop his funeral monument. Dating from between 1320 and 1336, these two works are attributed respectively to the sculptor Marco Romano and to the artist known as The Master of the Tomb of Bishop Castellano Salomone. As for the altar itself, this was sculpted by Giovanni Pisano, who signed the work, and was completed by 1305.

As already mentioned, the Scrovegni Chapel frescoes are also remarkable for the extraordinary realism with which they depict human emotions. Never before had painting so vividly captured the inner feelings of the figures portrayed. For example, in the *Last Judgement* the damned are depicted with terrifying realism as they are tortured by devils, the iconography being a visual exhortation to

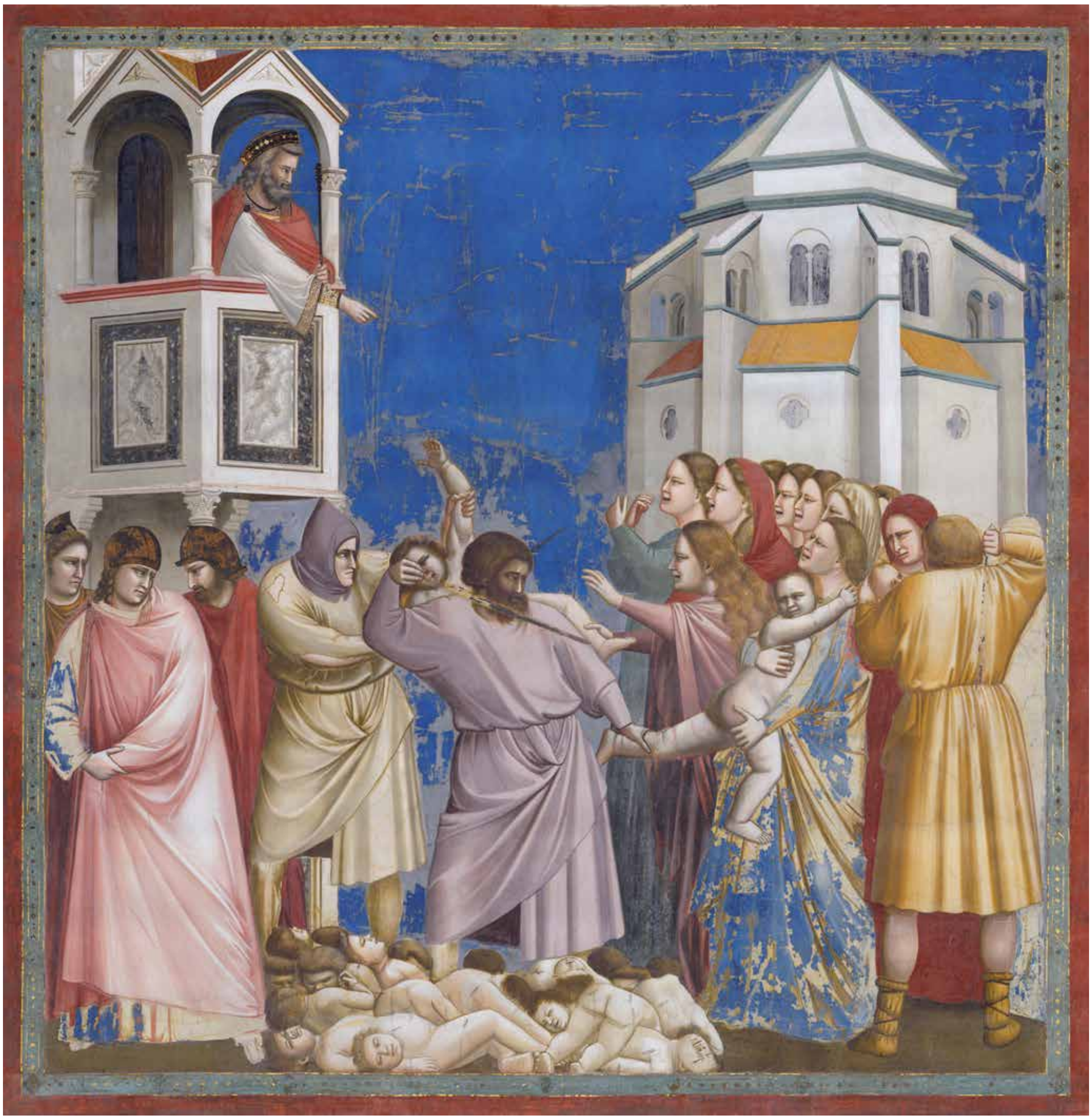


Ill. 8, Giotto, *The Last Judgement*, Scrovegni Chapel (detail of Hell)



Ill. 9, Giotto, *The Last Judgement*, Scrovegni Chapel onlookers to mend their ways and follow the path of virtue. This realism can also be seen in the narrative that unfolds along the walls of the nave, for example, in the sheer intensity of emotion depicted in the *Massacre of the Innocents*.

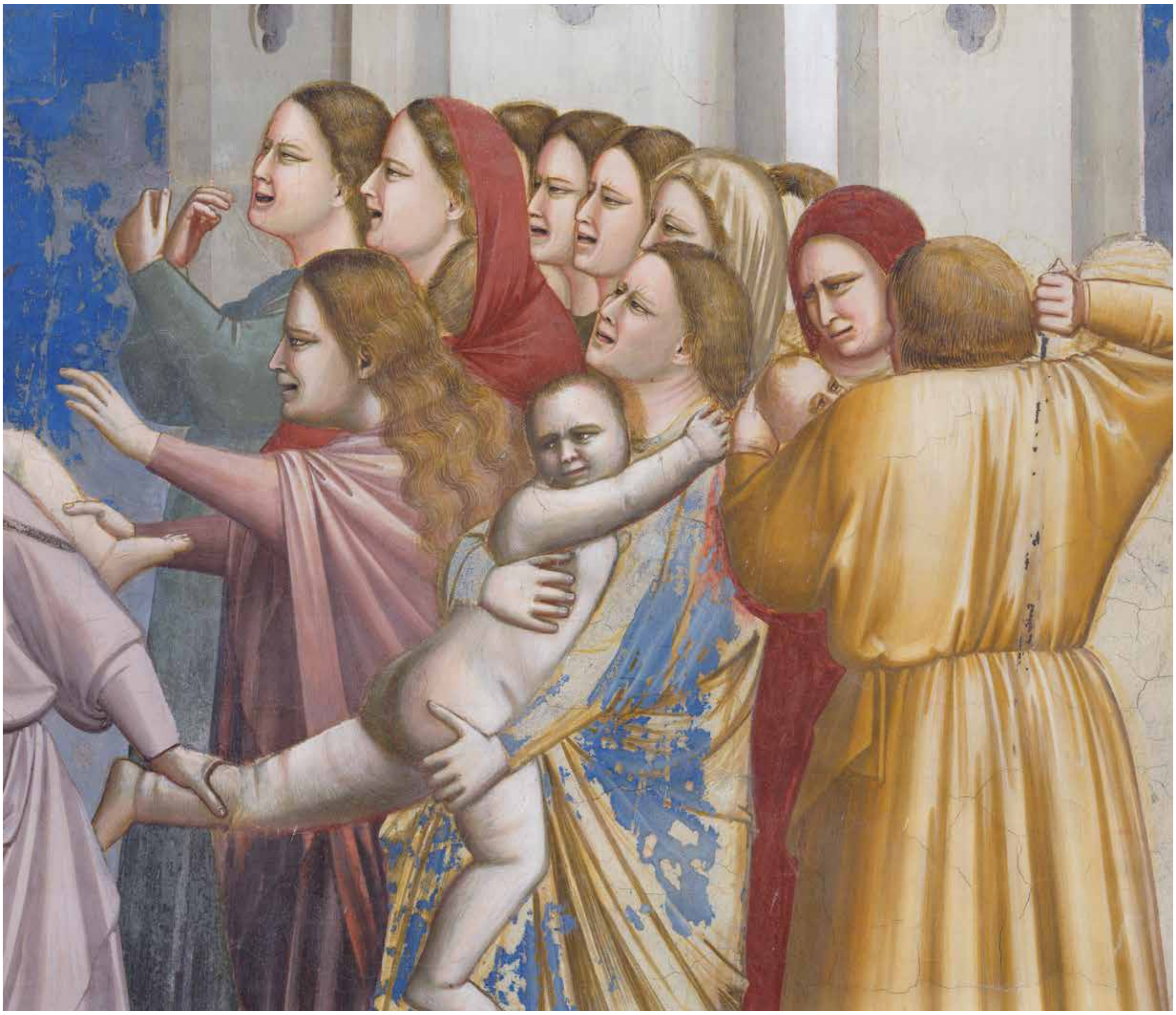
This feature of Giotto's work was already being cited by his contemporaries as a model to be followed; see, for example, the comments by Pietro d'Abano, a physician, philosopher and student of the stars who taught at the University of Padua and would, in 1306, inspire the iconography used in the astrological frescoes which Giotto painted in the Palazzo della Ragione (component part 2). A complement to this emotional realism was the fidelity with which the artist rendered everyday life, describing objects, fabrics and animals with such accuracy that one gets a vivid idea of life in fourteenth-century Italy. Both secular and biblical figures are portrayed in what contemporaries would undoubtedly have recognised as the real world, and thus scholars credit Giotto with initiating that



Ill. 10, Giotto, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, Scrovegni Chapel process which would 'secularise' the gospel narrative within a contemporary setting, a process that would then be further developed by other fresco cycles in fourteenth-century Padua, culminating in what one sees in the frescoes at the Oratory of St. Michael.

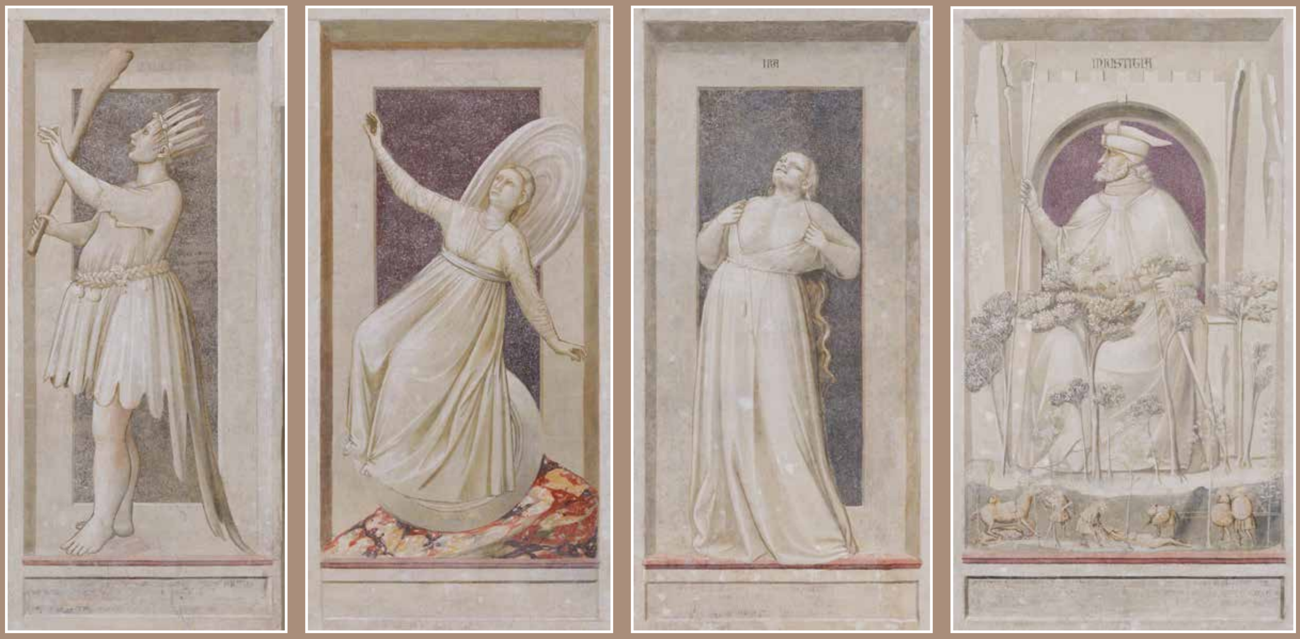
Within the presbytery of the Scrovegni Chapel there are two frescoes of *The Madonna Suckling the Christ Child*, both attributed to Giusto de' Menabuoi, one of the other artists whose fresco cycles are included in the nomination (component parts 2-3).

The monochrome dado of faux marble exemplifies most clearly the origins of the technique used by Giotto in creating these frescoes. A development upon the ancient technique of wall-painting which Vitruvius himself had described in Book VII of his *De Architectura*, it demonstrates how Giotto breathed new life into an ancient technique, his innovations then being taken up and reworked by other artists in the city.



Ill. 11, Giotto, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, Scrovegni Chapel (detail)

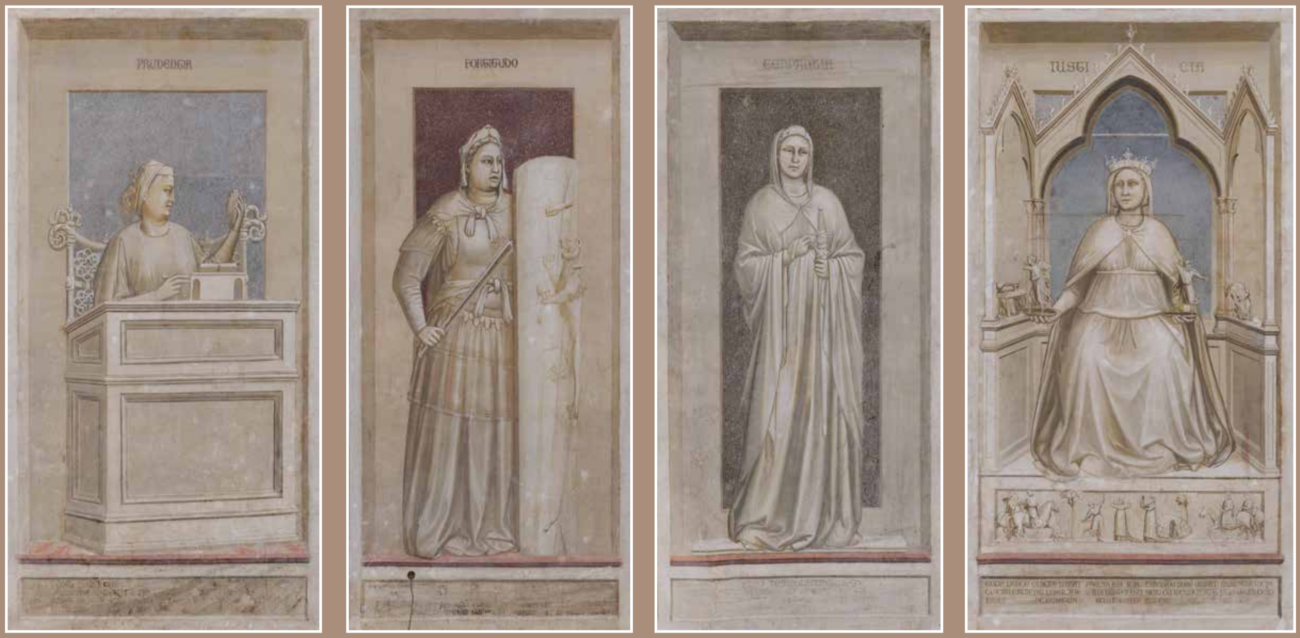
Vices


IRA
INIUSTICIA

Stultitude (a) *Inconstancy* (b) *Wrath* (c) *Injustice* (d)

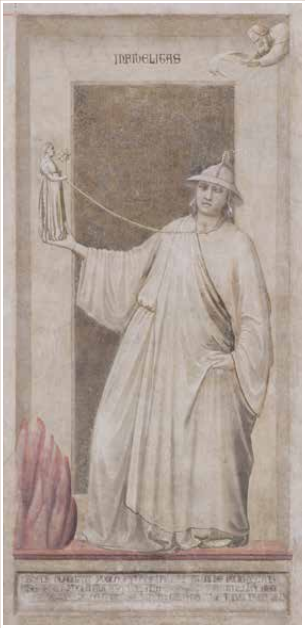
Fig. 12, Giotto, *Vices* (a - g), Scrovegni Chapel

Virtues

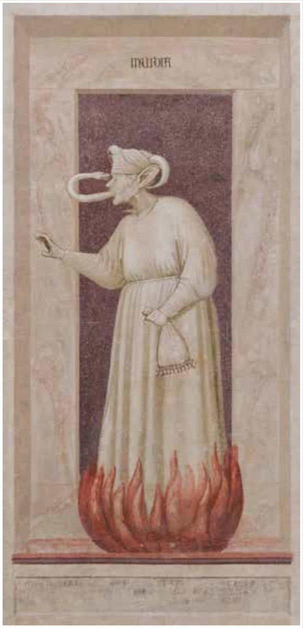

PRUDENCIA
FORTITUDO
IUSTI CIA

Prudence (a) *Fortitude* (b) *Temperance* (c) *Justice* (d)

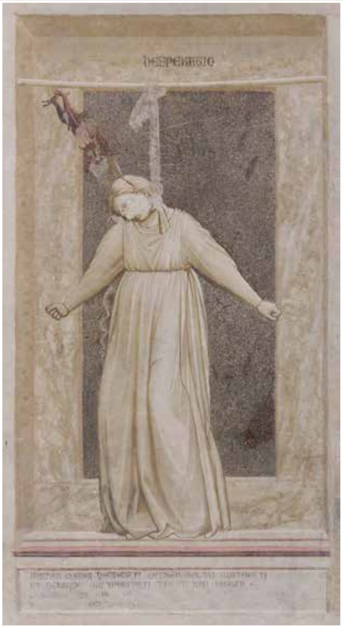
Fig. 13, Giotto, *Virtues* (a - g), Scrovegni Chapel


INFIDELITAS

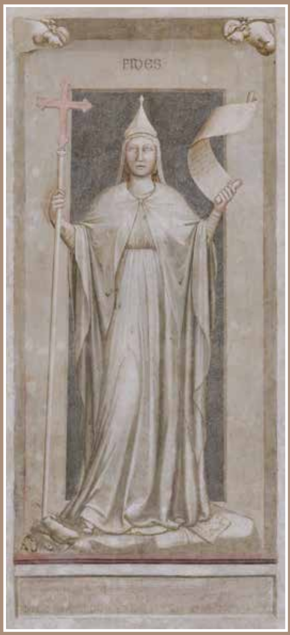
Infidelity (e)



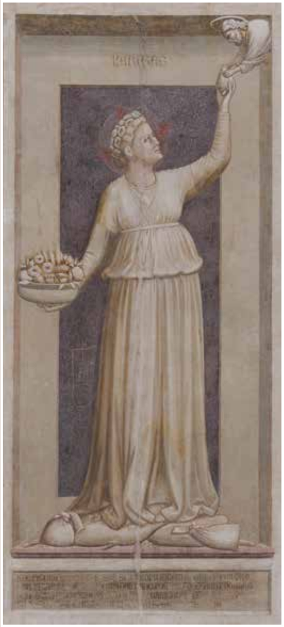
Envy (f)


DESPERATIO

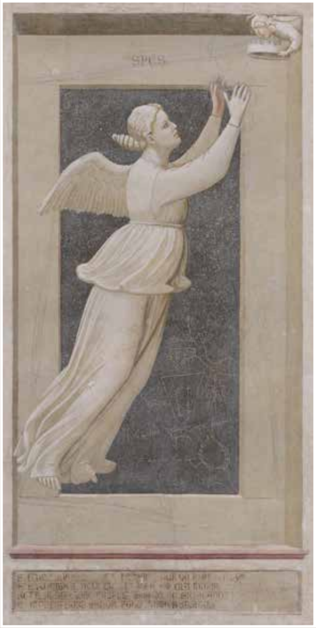
Despair (g)



Faith (e)



Charity (f)

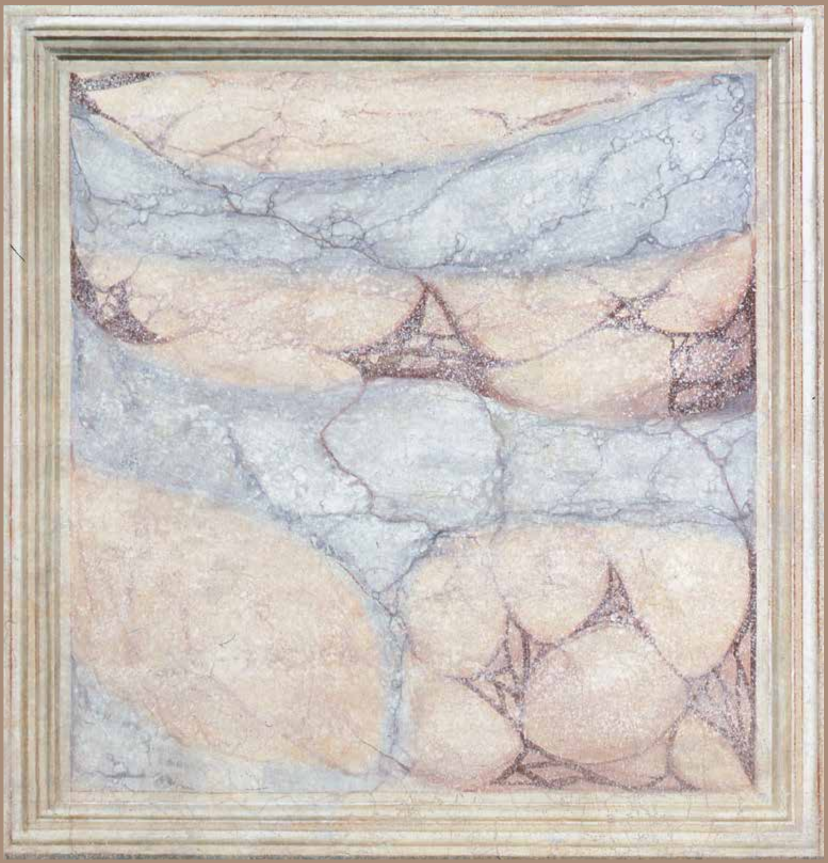


Hope (g)

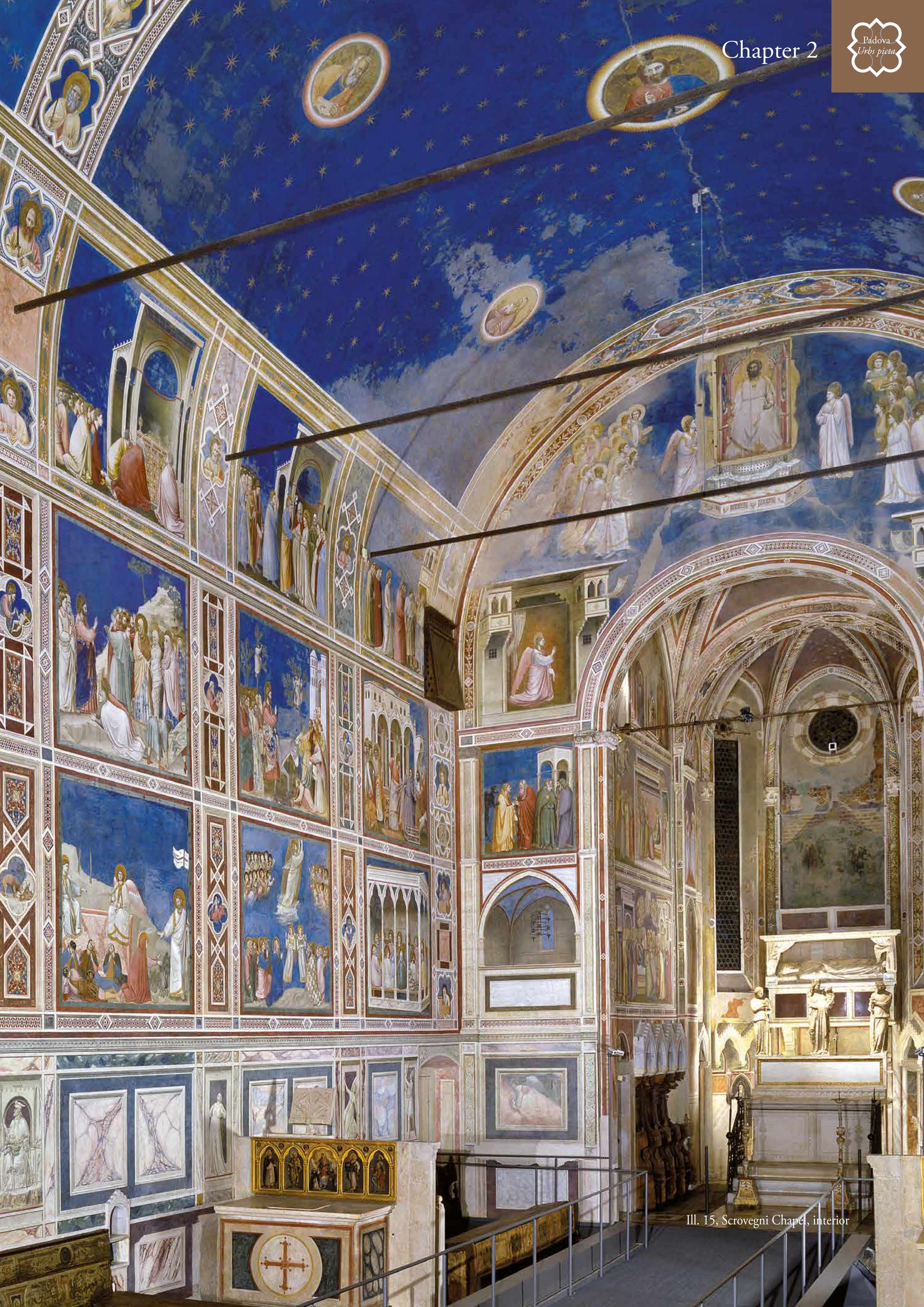
The Technique of Fresco Painting

This term refers to a particular type of mural painting in which paints, generally made of inorganic substances and mixed solely with water, were applied to freshly finished plaster made from an inert substance (very often river sand) mixed with a water solution of slaked lime (calcium hydroxide). Thus the only binding agent for the paint in fresco-work was the lime in the plaster, thanks to the process of transformation it underwent as it dried (carbonatation).

Fresco painting was widespread in classical antiquity. As far as Roman frescoes are concerned, we possess precise information regarding the technique used thanks to the accounts written by Vitruvius, which Giotto knew, and by Pliny; their comments have been confirmed by analyses of extant Roman wall paintings in Rome and Pompeii. Vitruvius, in fact, also recommended the addition of fine marble dust to the plaster so that the rendition of faux marble panels would be more realistic. And we know that, in his faux marble dado in the Scrovegni Chapel, Giotto followed this advice, mixing abundant quantities of slaked lime or fine marble dust to the wet plaster. He also refined the process by passing a hot iron over the surface in order to compress it to a smooth finish, creating an effect was even more marble-like.



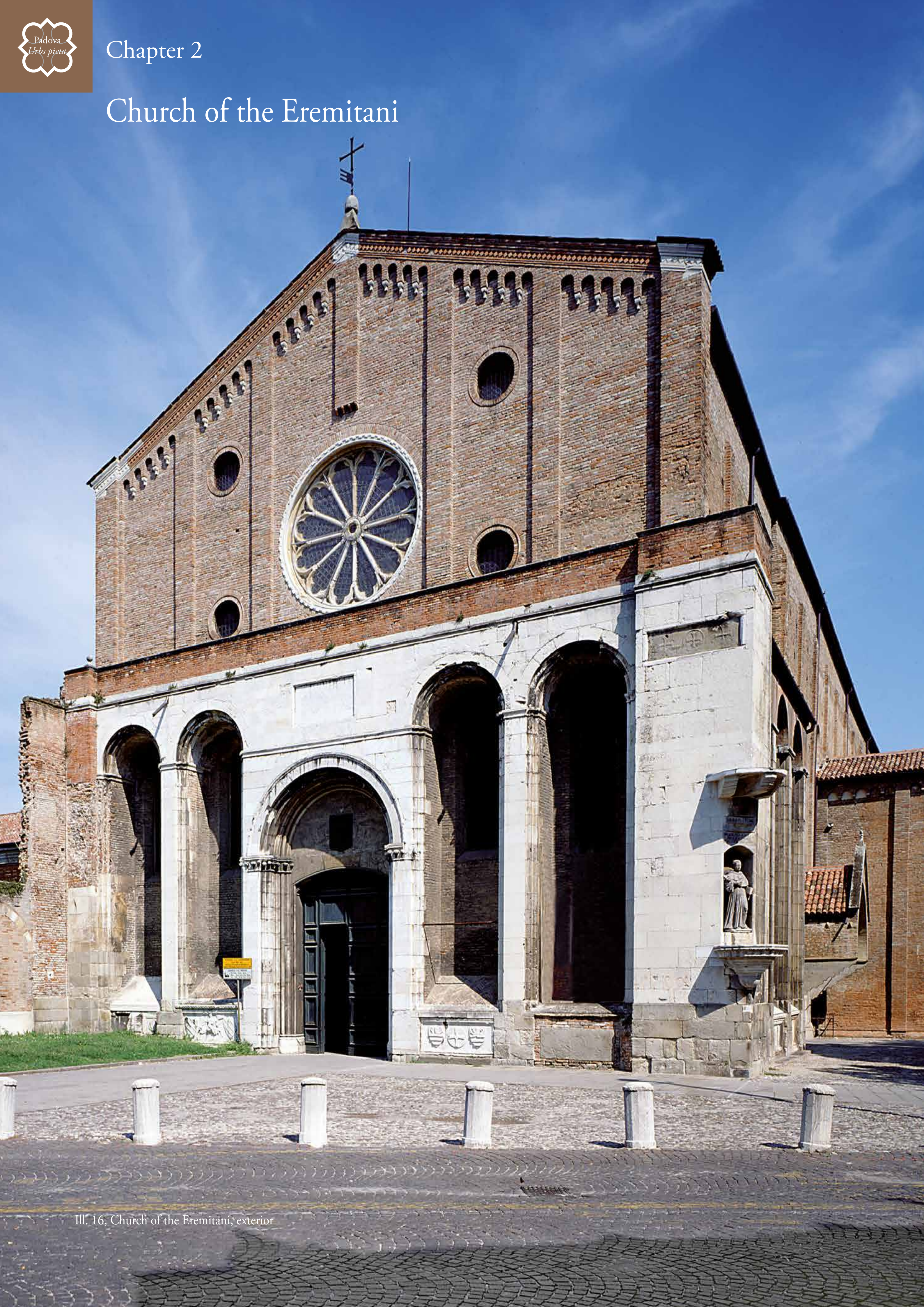
Ill. 14, Giotto, painted panel of faux marble, Scrovegni Chapel



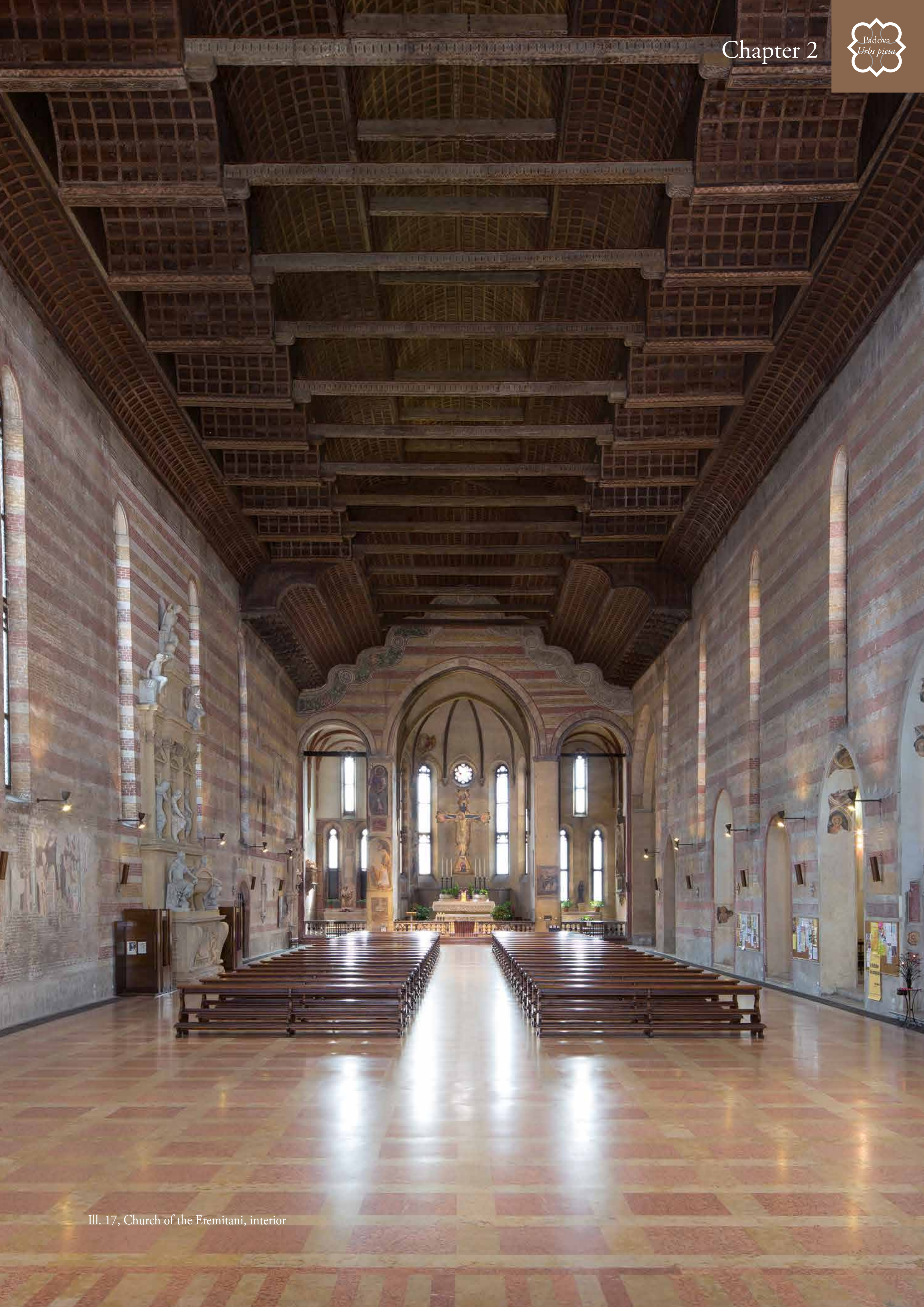
Ill. 15, Scrovegni Chapel, interior

Chapter 2

Church of the Eremitani



Ill. 16, Church of the Eremitani, exterior



Ill. 17, Church of the Eremitani, interior

Church of the Eremitani

Description of the Building

The exterior of the Church of the Eremitani is bare brick with pilaster strips and cornices resting on small projecting arches. The window openings in the gabled façade are at two levels: a central rose window between four smaller oculi. The doorway is aligned on a central axis with the rose window and is flanked by four trilobate single-light openings. There is also a blind loggia at ground level, which then continues along the south side of the building. On the facade itself, this loggia comprises five arches, a main one and four, narrower but higher, side ones; the central arch is splayed and the archivolt rests on capitals adorned with crockets.

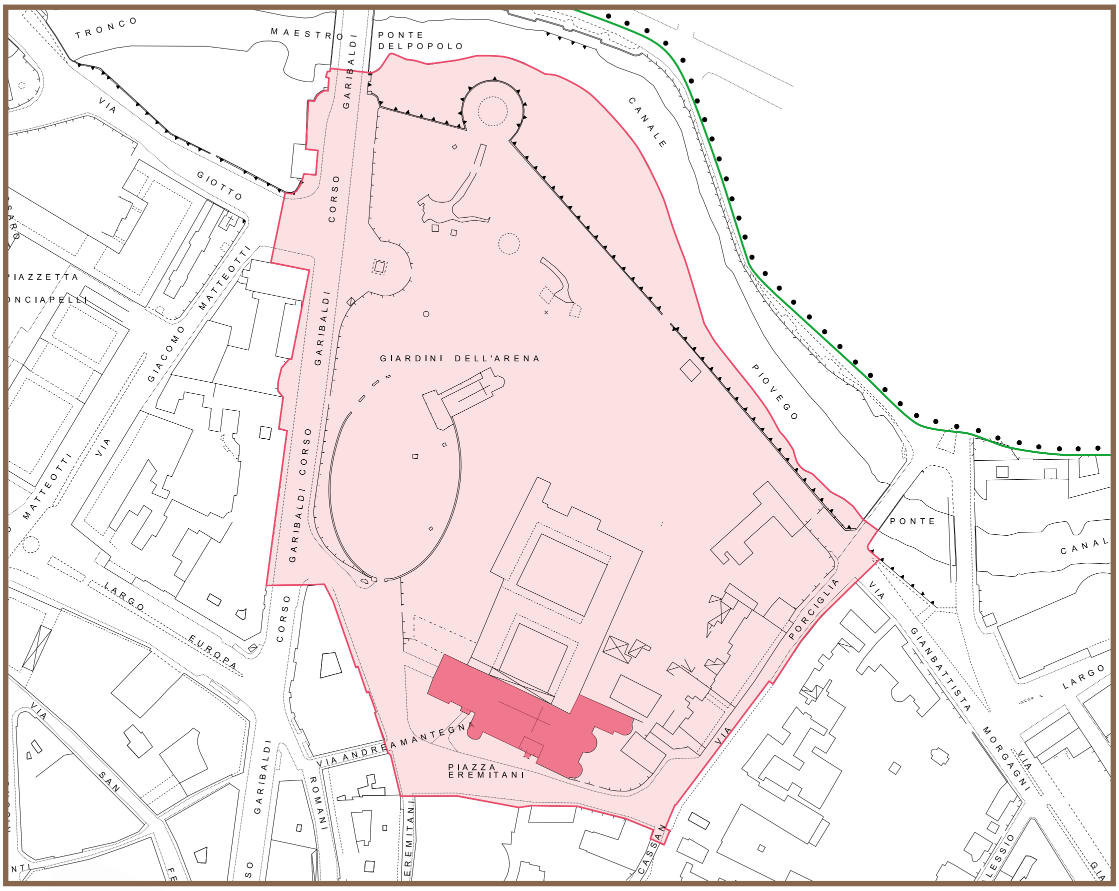
Light enters the interior not only through the windows in the façade but also through a series of single-light windows located at irregular intervals along the side walls, in the end wall of the nave and around the apse. There are also two side entrances to the church, both located in the south wall; one of these has a projecting prothyrum.

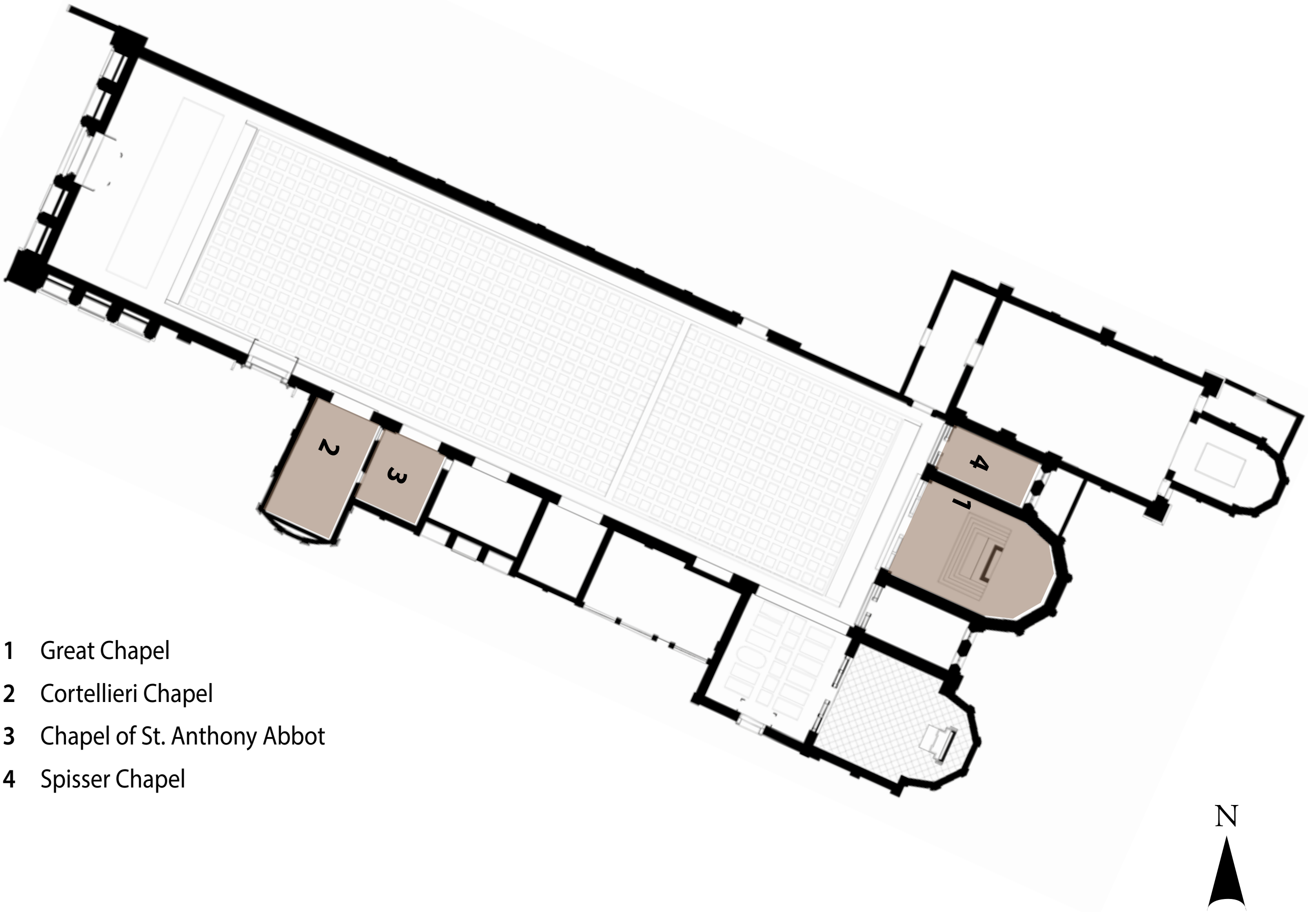
The interior layout of the church forms a single space with no side aisles, whilst the east wall is lined with four chapels. Other chapels line the south wall and there are some located at the eastern end of the north wall.

Of the chapels along the east wall, the central one - aligned along an axis that runs up the middle of the nave - is called the Great Chapel (*Cappella Maggiore*) and ends in a polygonal apse. It has a square floor plan, ribbed vaulting and the apse has a bowl-shaped vault. To either side of it are the Spisser Chapel (also known as the Sanguinacci Chapel) and the Dotto Chapel, which are perfectly symmetrical to each other and comprise two rectangular bay spans with ribbed vaulting. To the south side of the Dotto Chapel stands the Ovetari Chapel, which is reached via an Ante-chapel (*anticappella Ovetari*) that opens out through the south wall of the church. That ante-chapel has a rectangular floor plan and ribbed vaulting, while the Ovetari Chapel itself has ribbed vaulting and a bowl-shaped apsidal vault; its floor plan and appearance are clearly inspired by those of the Great Chapel.

Starting from the inside of the west wall, the chapels along the south wall of the church are: the Cortellieri Chapel, the Chapel of St. Anthony Abbot (now re-dedicated to St. Anthony of Padua), the Crucifixion Chapel and the Chapel of St. Joseph.

Above the chapel on the north wall rises the bell-tower, which is square in floor plan and has walls divided by pilaster strips and small arches. The belfry itself has two-light openings on all four sides.


VIA TRONCO MAESTRO
PONTE DEL POPOLO
CORSO GARIBALDI
VIA GIOTTO
VIA GIACOMO MATTEOTTI
PIAZZETTA
GIARDINI DELL'ARENA
CANALE PIOVEGO
PONTE
CANAL
LARGO EUROPA
VIA SAN
VIA ANDREA MANTEGNA
PIAZZA EREMITANI
ROMANI
EREMITANI
VIA PORCIGLIA
VIA GIANBATTISTA MORGAGNI
LARGO
VIA ALESSIO
CASSAN



1 Great Chapel
2 Cortellieri Chapel
3 Chapel of St. Anthony Abbot
4 Spisser Chapel

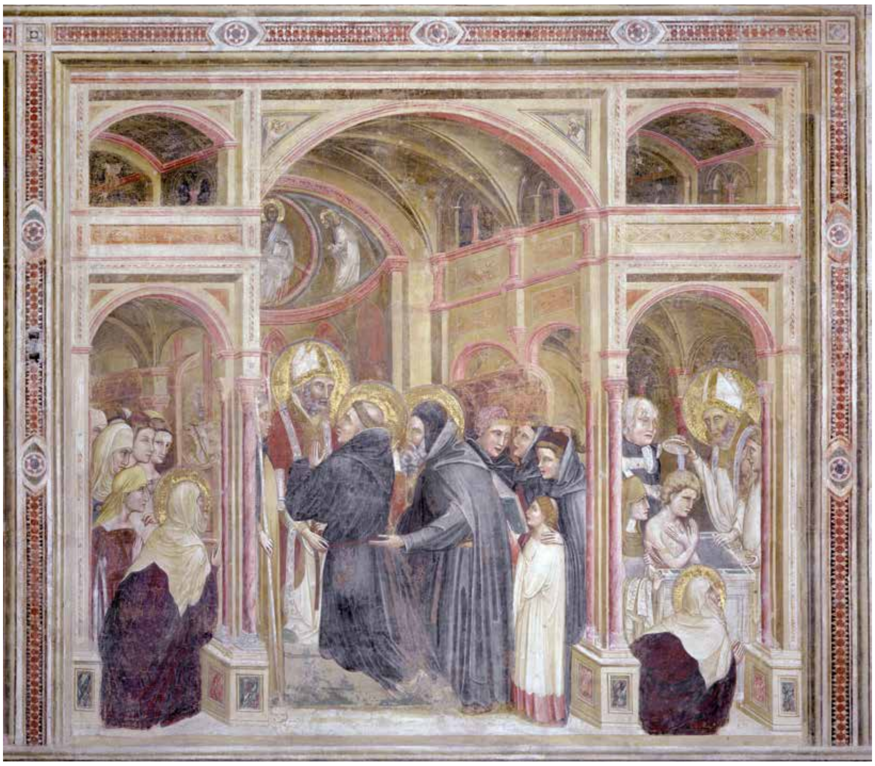
From the exterior, one sees little of the north wall as it is occupied by the buildings of the former monastery and the Ferial Chapel (formerly the New Sacresty). It has four large single-light windows and a doorway which leads through to the Chapterhouse Cloister (now the Albini Cloister and part of the complex of the Musei Civici agli Eremitani) and gives access to the adjoining spaces.

The entire length of the single nave church is decorated with a painted motif comprising strips of white, red and yellow which imitate lines of brickwork. The upper limit of this motif is adorned with a floral cornice dating from the sixteenth century. The keel roof in larch wood was the work of Giovanni degli Eremitani, who was also responsible for the transformation the Palazzo della Ragione underwent in the fourteenth century. The roofing actually comprises two parts that are of different profiles. For about three-quarters of the length of the church, the keel roof has three central lobes resting on small barrel vaults with beams that run across the nave; the last part of the roofing is lower and is modulated into seven lobes. Like all medieval churches, the Eremitani once had a rood screen that divided the space for the clergy from that occupied by the laity, and the location of this partition separating sacred and secular was where the keel roof changes in height.

Description of the Fresco Cycles

Commonly known simply as the Church of the Eremitani, *Santi Filippo e Giacomo agli Eremitani* was one of the most richly decorated in fourteenth-century Padua; even today it still houses works that chart the entire history of achievements in that medium over the course of this period. From the 1330s to the 1370s, both Guariento di Arpo and Giusto de' Menabuoi would work here on cycles that show how these artists developed upon the model set by Giotto. Guariento in particular reveals his pronounced interest in the depiction of space: the painted architectural features in his frescoes here are rendered with greater precision and complexity, creating a scenography that accurately reflects the Gothic style of architecture which had inspired it. Indeed, the architectural features here are fundamental in articulating the spaces within which the scenes from sacred history are being acted out.

Elsewhere in the Church of the Eremitani, Giusto de' Menabuoi focused his attention on what could be achieved through the use of colour. It was this aspect of Giotto's work that interested him most, and here colour becomes an ever more decisive factor in the rendition of both spatial setting and bodily volume.

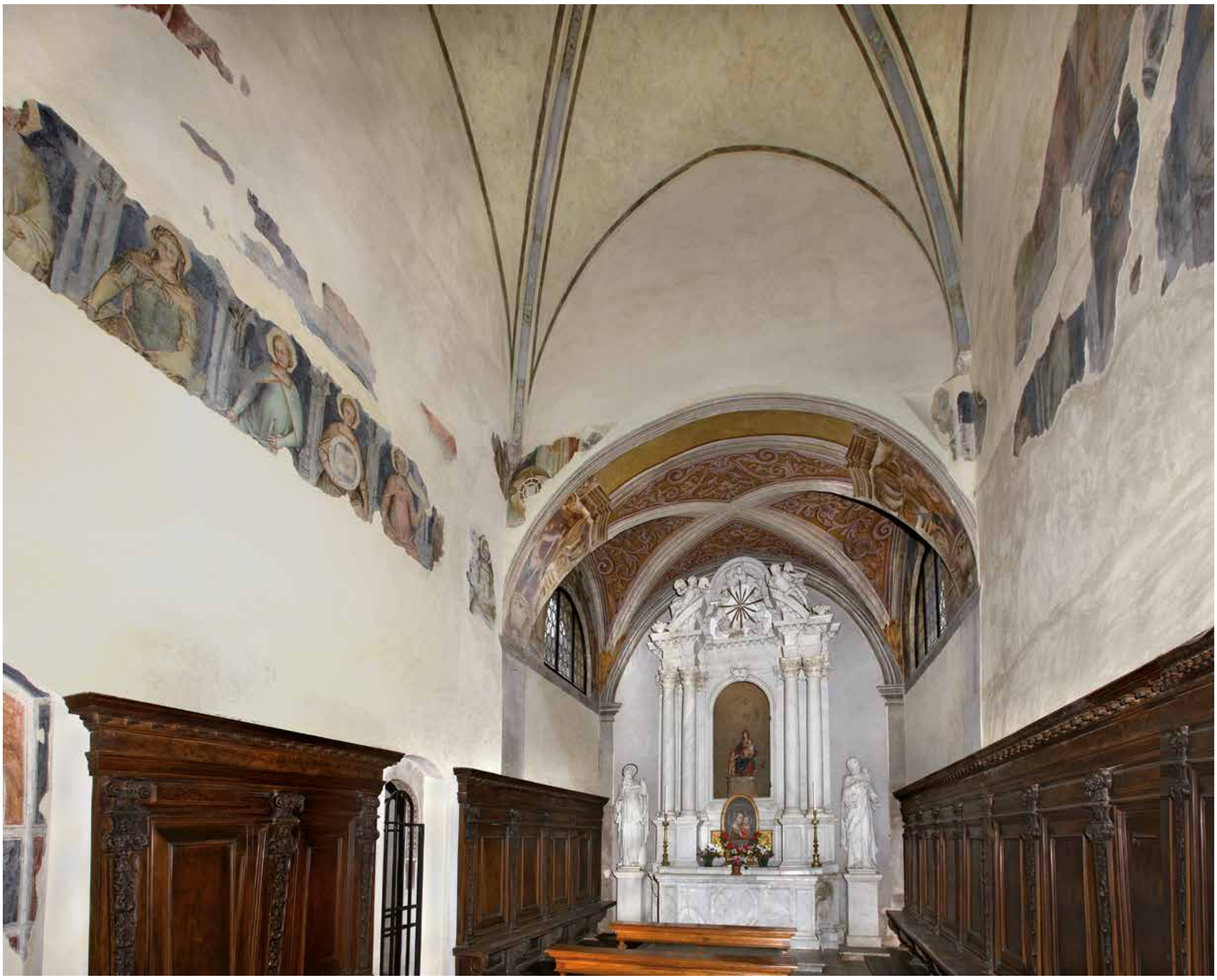


Ill. 18, Guariento, *The Investiture of St. Augustine*, Great Chapel, Church of the Eremitani

The church itself, attached to an Augustinian monastery, was a place of public worship, but in both cases these fresco cycles were commissioned for private chapels by aristocratic families linked to the Carraresi court. Furthermore, the Eremitani frescoes have a feature that they share solely with only one other cycle in the nomination: the presence of works commissioned by a woman. Here, these are the Giusto de' Menabuoi frescoes commissioned by Traversina Cortellieri; in the Baptistery, they are the works painted at the behest of Fina Buzzaccarini (component part 2).

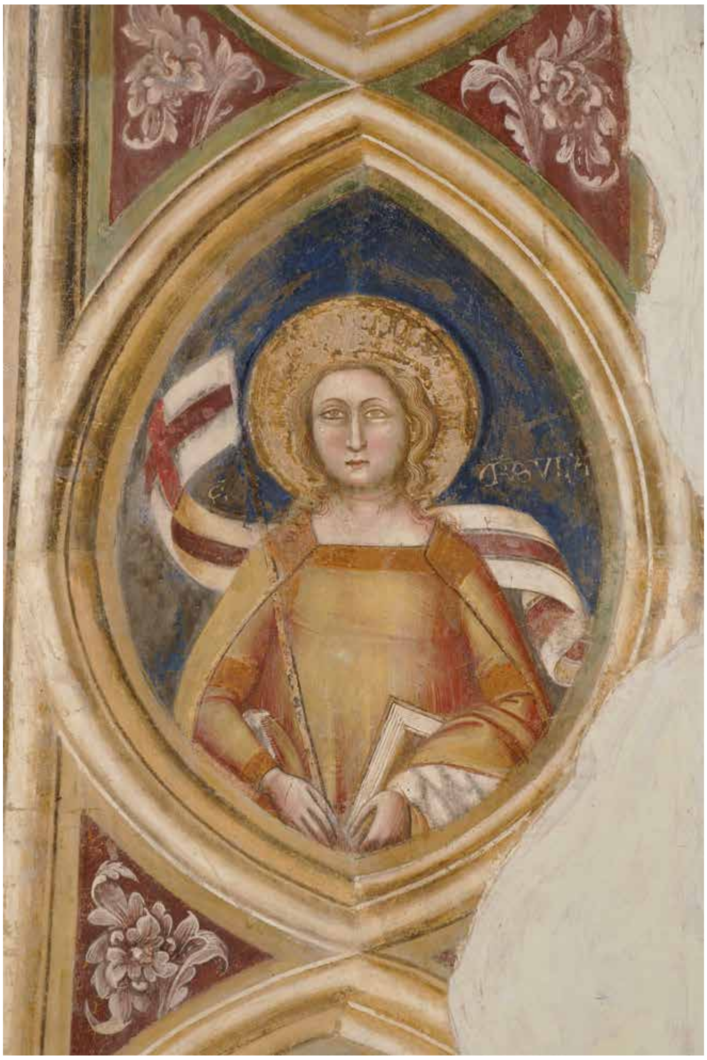
The frescoes cycles by Guariento covered by the nomination are to be found in the Chapel of St. Anthony Abbot (now the Chapel of St. Anthony of Padua) and in the Great Chapel, whilst the Giusto de' Menabuoi frescoes are those in the Cortellieri Chapel and the Spisser (or Sanguinacci) Chapel. The earliest is that in the Chapel of St. Anthony Abbot, where - around 1338 - Guariento depicted episodes from the *Lives of the Saints* in a cycle that still survives in six half-length female figures (on the intrados of the entrance archway) and numerous fragments along the walls. The second cycle came around thirty years later, in the Great Chapel - that is, in effect, the high altar and apse - where one can still see parts of Guariento's most important frescoes. Complex both in

Ill. 19, Cortellieri Chapel, Church of the Eremitani

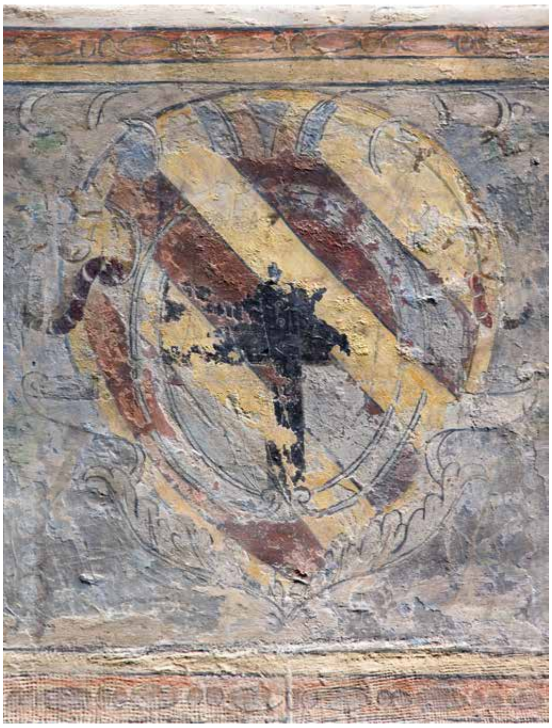


scale and variety of subject-matter, these works show the artist to have achieved rigorous mastery of perspective; the compositional skill demonstrated here enabled him to create a much more convincing illusion of three-dimensional space than that one sees in his earlier frescoes in the chapel of the Carraresi Palace (component part 2).

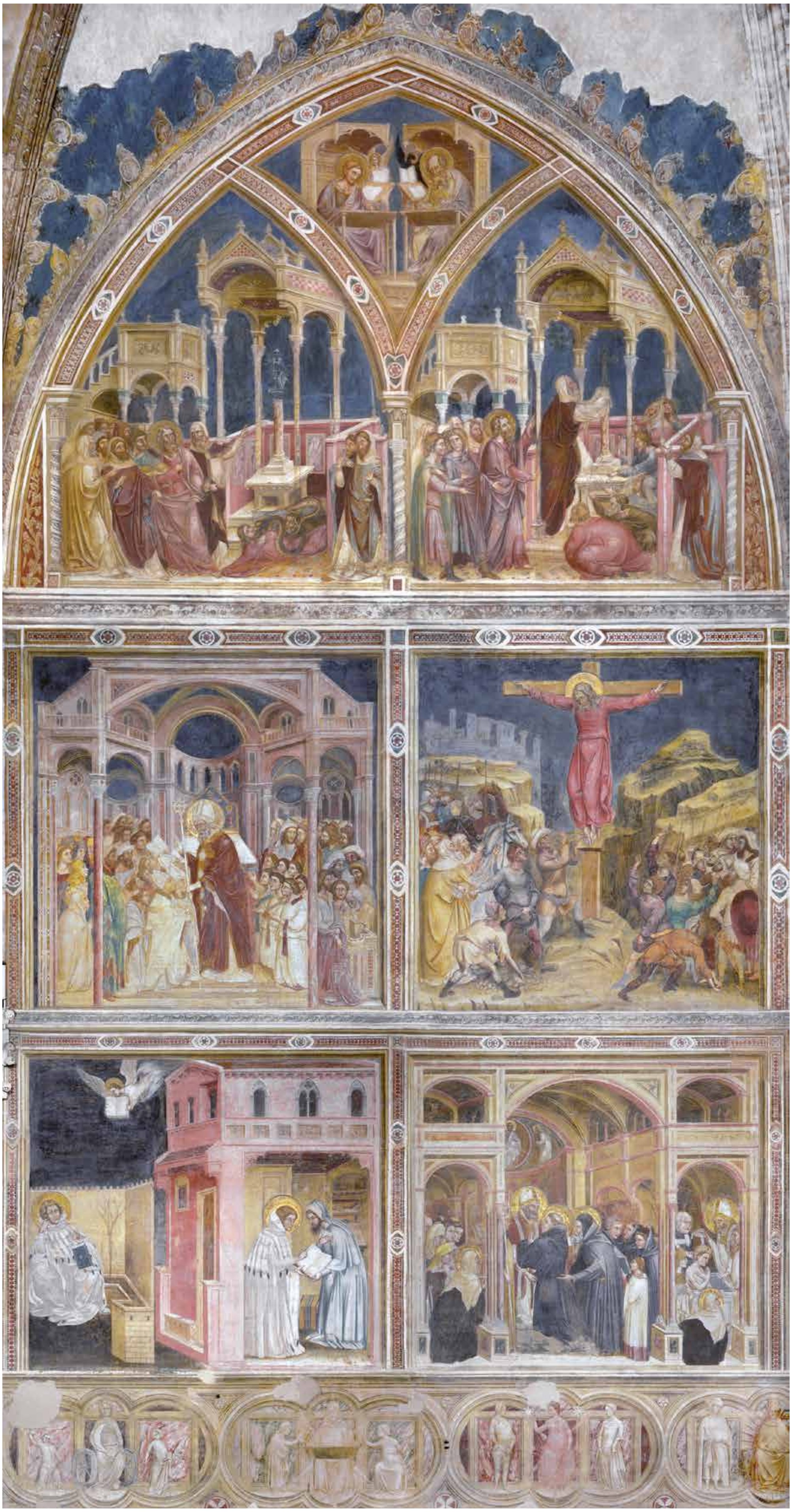
The extant cycle comprises seven scenes spread across three levels on the north wall, all recounting *Episodes from the Life of Saints Philip, James and Augustine*; beneath these is a monochrome dado painted with *The Planets and The Seven Ages of Man* - a feature that was inspired by Giotto's *Vices* and *Virtues* in the Scrovegni Chapel (component part 1). The tondi in the rib-vaulted ceiling depict four *Doctors of the Church*. The presence of a crest here, with transversal stripes of yellow and red, has given rise to the idea that this work may have been commissioned by the Curtarolo family, a member of which appears here in the foreground of the *Last Judgement* with his hands clasped in prayer.



Ill. 20, Guariento, *St. Ursula*, Chapel of St. Anthony, Church of the Eremitani

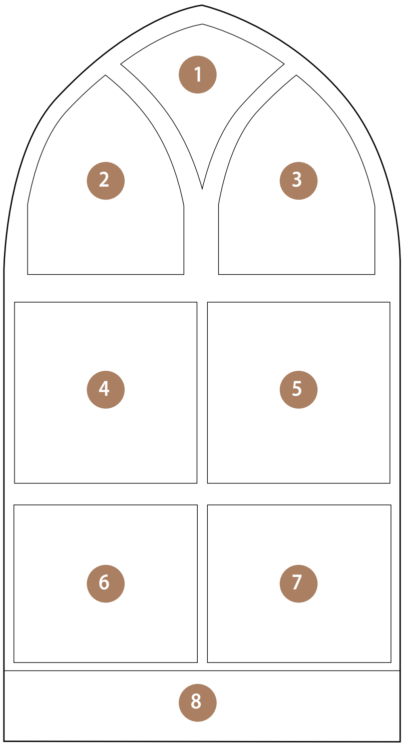


Ill. 21, Guariento, Crest of the Curtarolo family?, Great Chapel, Church of the Eremitani



Ill. 22, Guariento, *Scenes from the lives of St. Philip and St. Augustine*, Great Chapel, Church of the Eremitani

Plan of the Fresco Cycle in the Great Chapel in the Church of the Eremitani



Legend

North Wall (moving downwards)

1 *St. Matthew and St. John*
2 *St. Philip forced to sacrifice to Mars*
3 *St. Philip replaces an idol with the Cross*
4 *St. Augustine assembles the bishops of Africa*
5 *The Crucifixion of St. Philip*
6 *St. Augustine's Vision*
7 *The Investiture of St. Augustine*
8 *The Planets and the Seven Ages of Man*

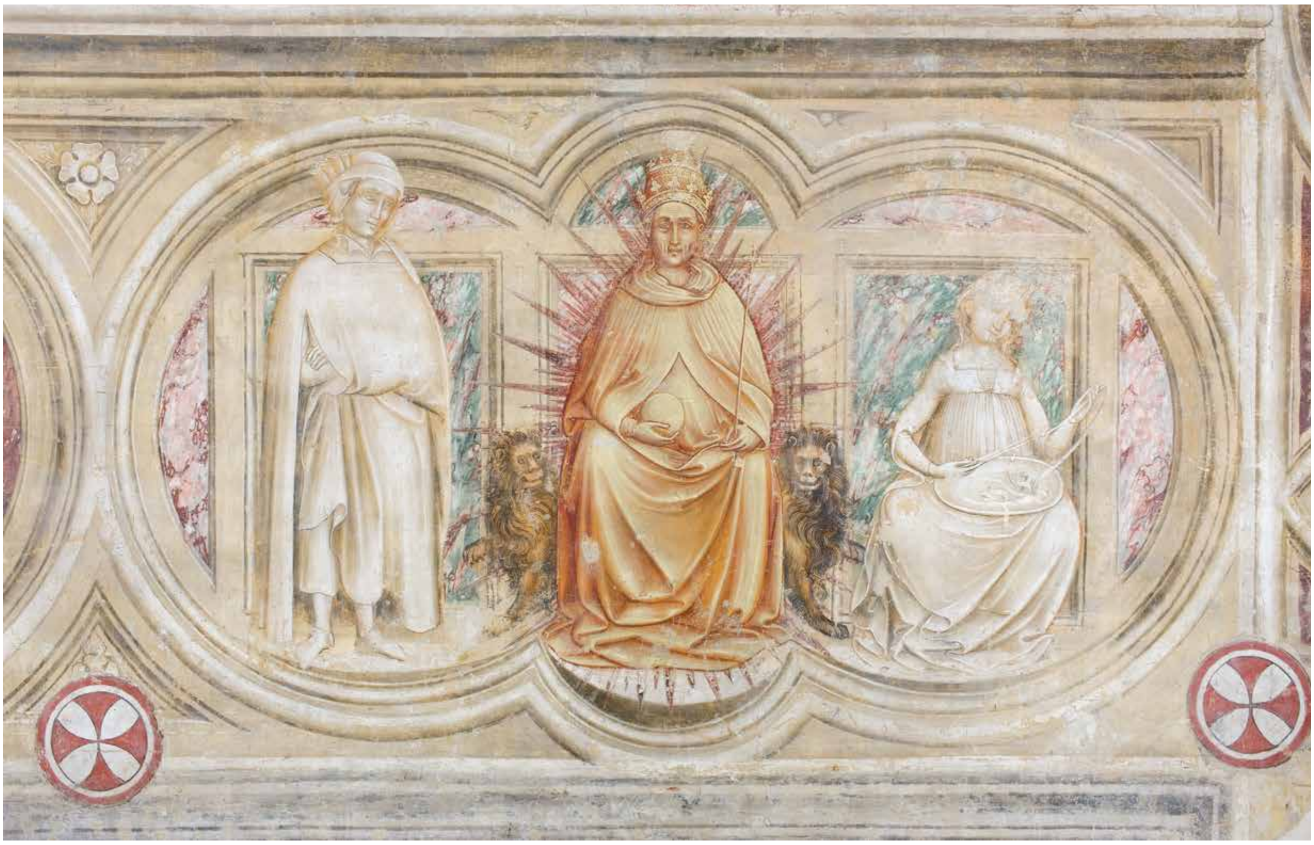
On the south wall are scenes from the *Life of St. James* (below) and scenes from the *Lives of St. Mark and St. Luke* (above), whilst in the apse there is a *Last Judgement* above a dado with *Scenes from Christ's Passion*, the only extant remains of which are a few groups of saints. The bowl-shaped apse vault is decorated with *Armed Angels* set amidst elegant foliage, whilst in the window embrasures are frescoes with *Scenes from the Old Testament*. Finally, the apse and presbytery are separated by a band with other scenes taken from the Bible. Nowadays, the Church of the Eremitani also houses fragments of the frescoes that Guariento originally painted for the church of Sant'Agostino: the *Coronation of the Virgin with the figures of Ubertino Carraresi and Jacopo II Carraresi*. The tombs of Ubertino and Jacopo Carraresi from the same church, sculpted by Andreoli de Santi between 1345 and 1351, were also brought here in the nineteenth century and installed to the sides of the entrance; on them one can still see traces of Guariento's original painted decoration. This is important evidence from a church which no longer exists but in its day served as the mausoleum of the Carraresi family.

Continuing with the description of the fourteenth-century frescoes in the church of the Eremitani we now come to the cycles Giusto de' Menabuoi painted in the Cortellieri Chapel, where one can see *St. Augustine in Glory with the Virtues and the Liberal Arts*. The space here was originally divided into bands at five levels separated by painted architectural features. What remains is the intact frieze showing the *Virtues and The Liberal Arts*; this secular theme was chosen by the commissioning patron to honour the memory of his son Tebaldo, a jurist at the Carraresi court. The work is a clear example of how the artist uses colour to model volume and spatial perspective.

In 1373, Giusto de' Menabuoi was again at work in the Church of the Eremitani - in the Spisser Chapel, where he painted a fresco for the nobleman Enrico Spisser; this is further important evidence of a commission from a figure linked to the Carraresi court. The same chapel also contains work by Jacopo da Verona, the artist of the fresco decoration at the Oratory of St. Michael (component part 4); his presence here is a sign of the flourishing interaction between artists and patrons in fourteenth-century Padua.

Within the Guariento cycles one can trace the growing maturity of an artist who had been decisively influenced by Giotto and his exploration of the visual rendition of three-dimensional space, but then developed rigorous perspective in a way that was increasingly close to the forms inspired by International Gothic.

Florentine in origin, like Giotto himself, Giusto de' Menabuoi was already a renowned artist when he received the commission for the Church of the Eremitani. The frescoes here would enable him to further develop his exploration of how colour might be used to model space and volume, moving towards what is his undoubted masterpiece: the fresco cycle in the Cathedral Baptistery (component part 2)

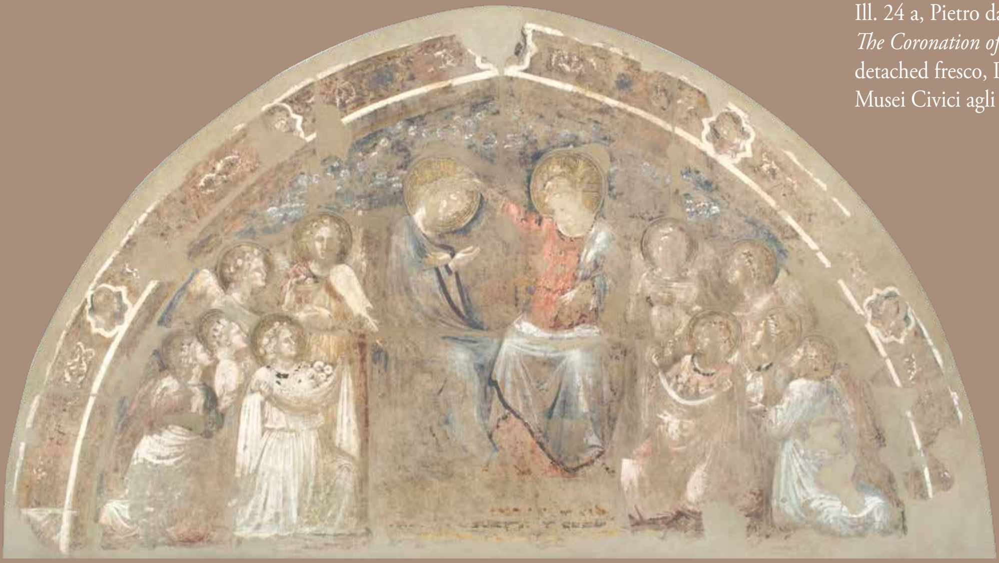


Ill. 23, Guariento, *The Sun*, Great Chapel, Church of the Eremitani (detail)

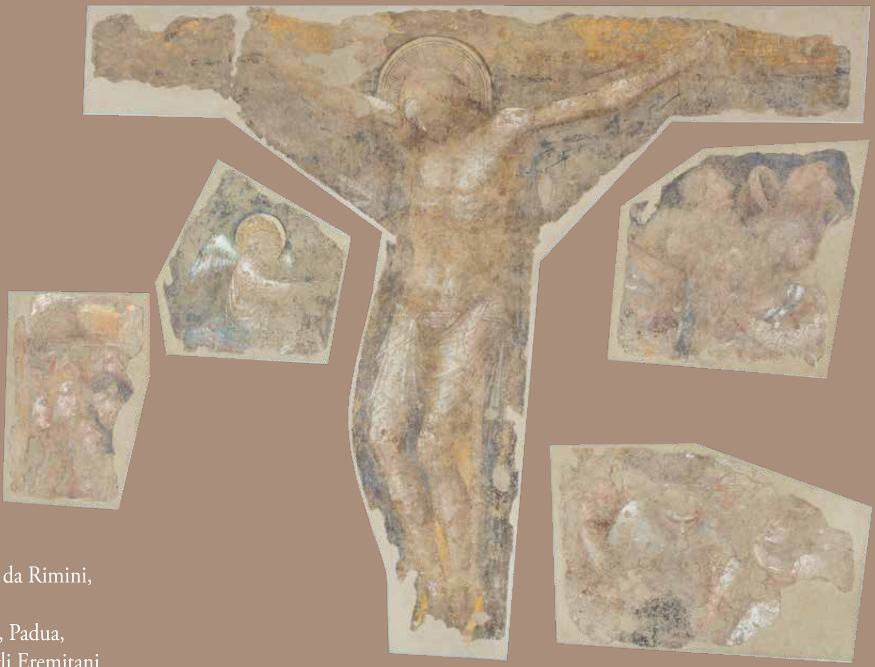
The Fresco Cycle in the Monastery of the Eremitani

In 1324, the artists Pietro and Giuliano da Rimini drew upon what they had learnt from Giotto's work in the Scrovegni Chapel when they painted a fresco cycle in the Monastery of Santi Filippo e Giacomo agli Eremitani, producing works that interpret the revolution brought about by Giotto in a spirit already recognisable as heralding International Gothic. Eighteen fragments of this important cycle, depicting the *Life of Christ*, survive and are now housed in the nearby Musei Civici agli Eremitani.

This important project was commissioned by the Augustinian monks after the remodelling of the interior and exterior of the church by Fra Giovanni degli Eremitani. That work was begun in 1306 - just a year after the completion of Giotto's frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel - and it would be the same Fra Giovanni who, just a few years later, would work on the architectural remodelling of the Palazzo della Ragione.



Ill. 24 a, Pietro da Rimini,
The Coronation of the Virgin,
detached fresco, Padua,
Musei Civici agli Eremitani



Ill. 24 b, Pietro da Rimini,
The Crucifixion,
detached fresco, Padua,
Musei Civici agli Eremitani

2.a.2

Palazzo della Ragione, Carraresi Palace, Baptistery and associated Piazzas

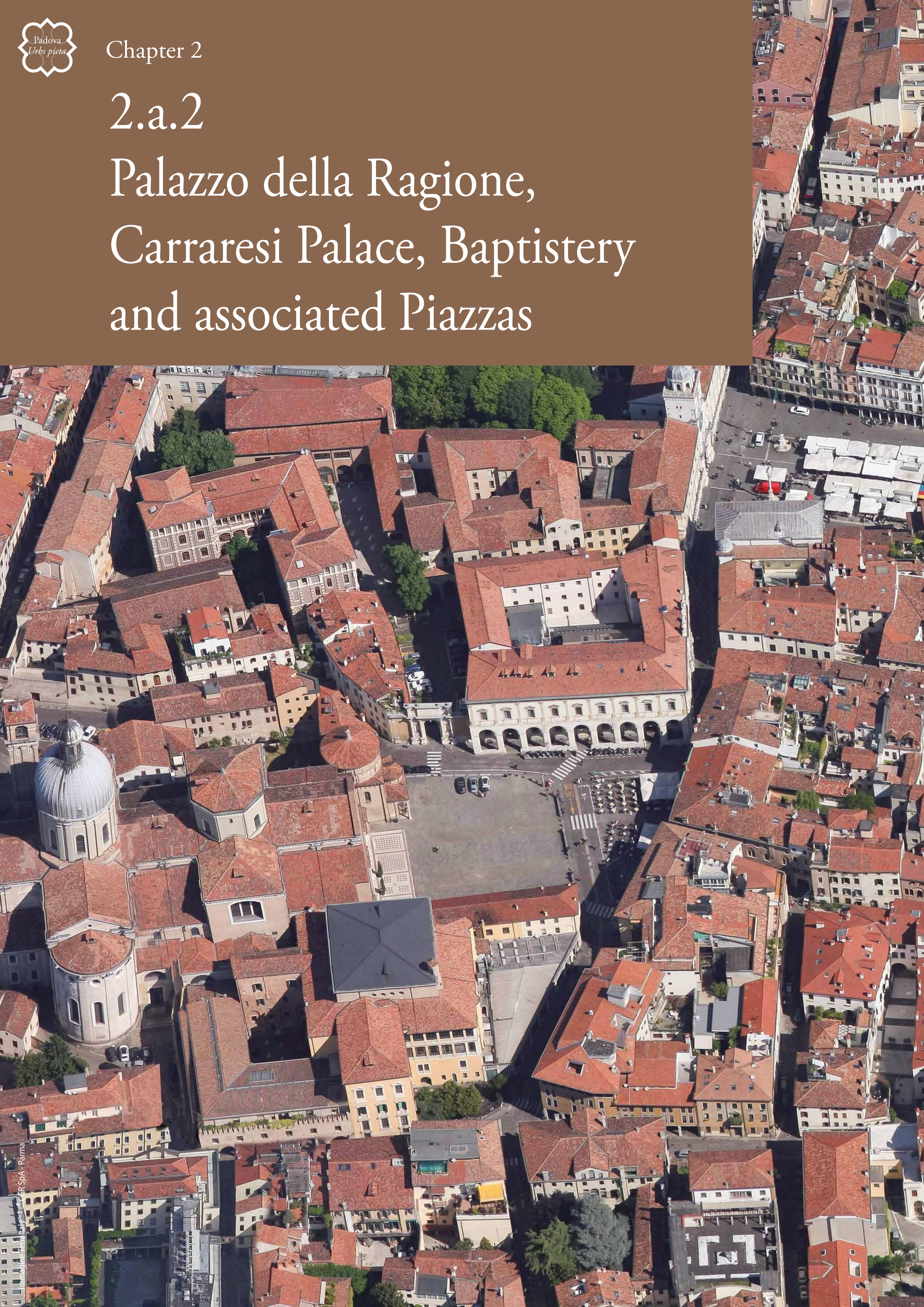
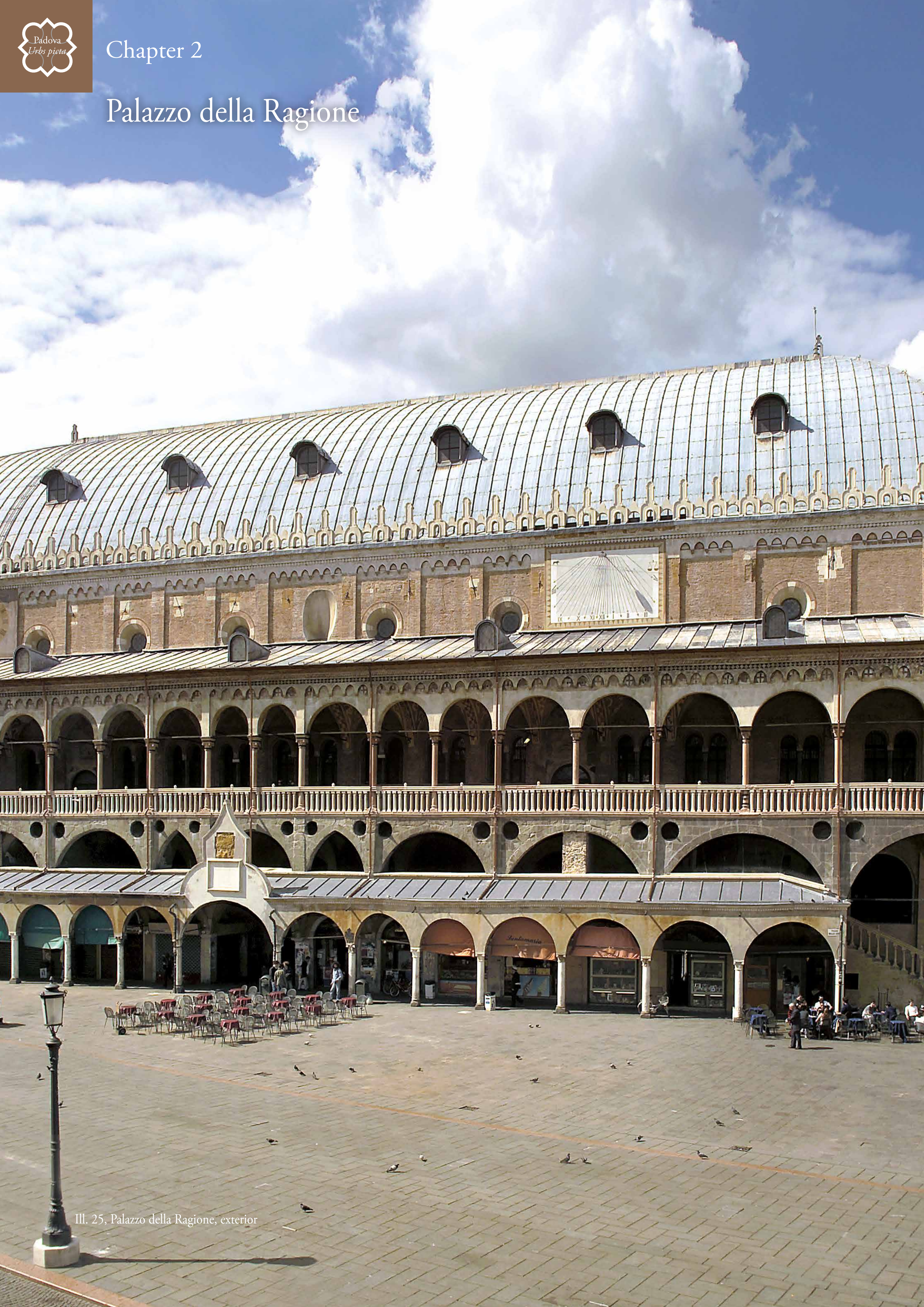


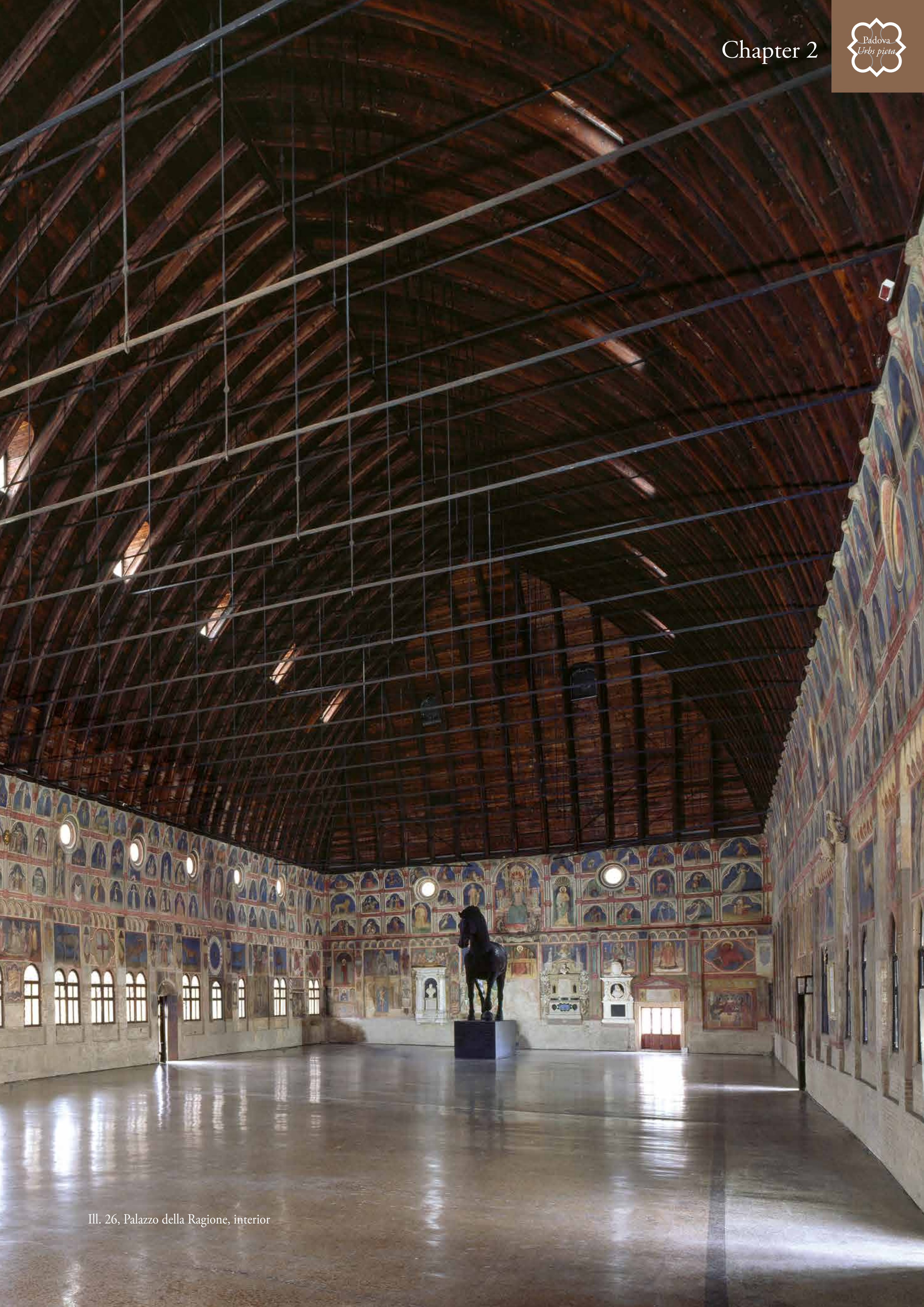
Immagine TerraItaly™ - © CGR SpA - Parma

Chapter 2

Palazzo della Ragione



Ill. 25, Palazzo della Ragione, exterior



Ill. 26, Palazzo della Ragione, interior

Palazzo della Ragione

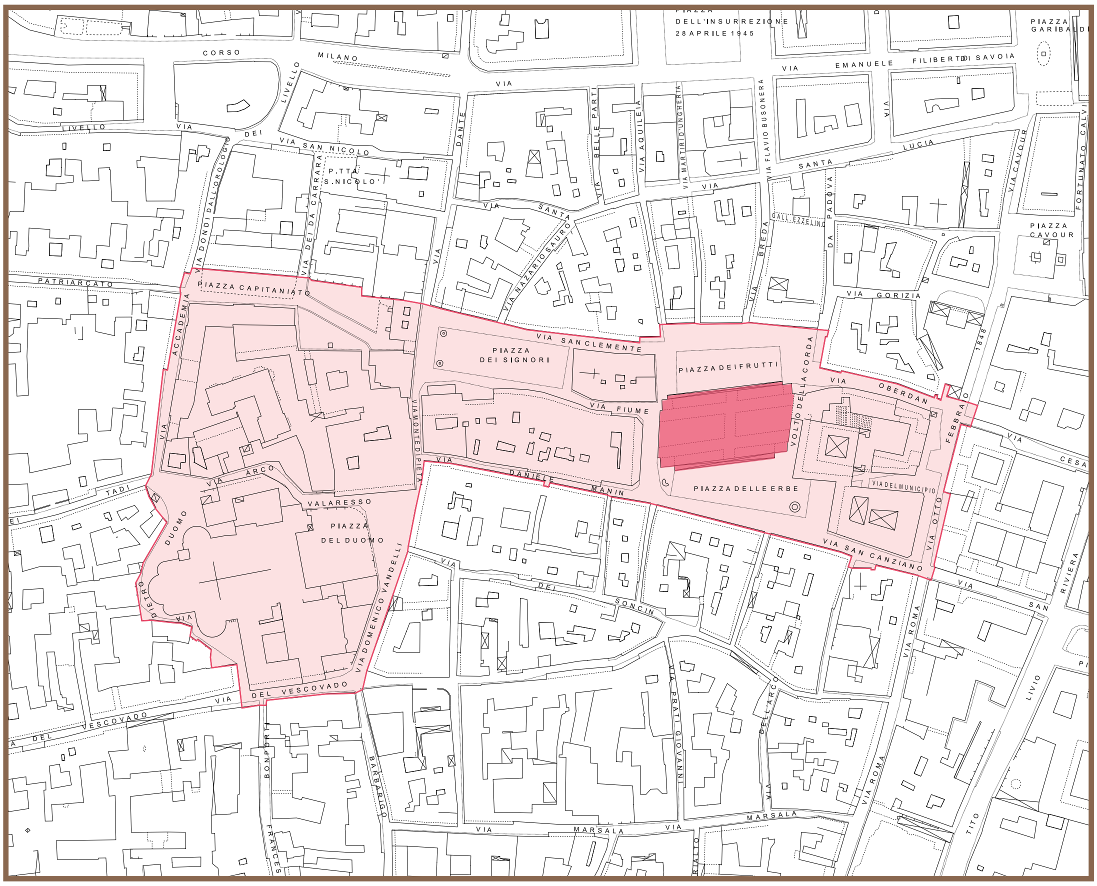
Description of the Building

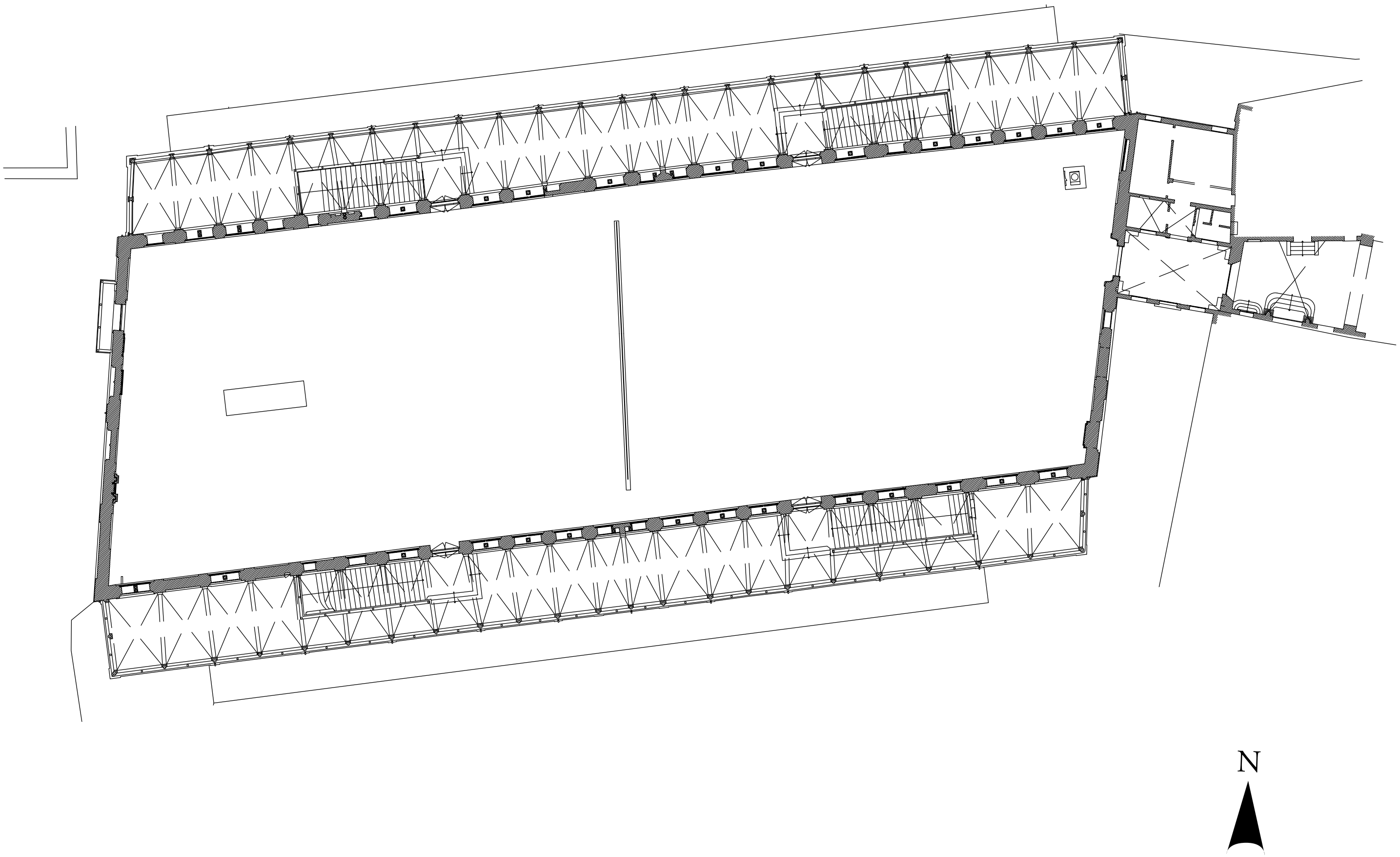
Once the largest public hall in Europe, the Palazzo della Ragione was famous both for its architecture - complete with a distinctive keel-vault roof - and the rich cycle of painted decoration within it.

A large structure - its long sides, south and north respectively, measuring 81.49 m and 79.92, with the shorter sides each about 27.80 m - the building is divided into two floors; the slightly irregular rectangular floor plan is due to the fact it used existing Roman and early medieval structures as its foundation. The long sides have a double order of loggias which link the interior with the outside space; and at ground level there are two intersecting corridors running east-west and north-south which serve to link the public squares around the building. Set under a rib-vaulted ceiling, the spaces which give onto these two corridors are, as in the past, occupied by food shops and laid out in such a way that they form a continuous whole with the old open-air markets in the squares outside. The upper floor, which is now one single space, was formerly divided into different rooms but now has the appearance of a large fresco-decorated hall. The ogive roof, formed of a series of wooden arches linked by studded panels of larch wood, rests on a brick/stone impost that runs the length of the side walls. Nowadays, the intrados appears as an expanse of exposed beams, but documentary evidence shows that formerly there was a wooden ceiling decorated with some 700 golden stars, painted in relation to the astrological cycle in the frescoes along the walls. The exterior of the roof is covered with lead sheeting.

At the base of the vault impost there is a sort of secret passageway, about two metres high, that runs round all four sides of the building and gives direct access to the roof at various points.

In terms of style, the Palazzo della Ragione has maintained the appearance it took on after the work here of Fra Giovanni degli Eremitani, a particular feature of which was the addition of a double loggia in wood, around 1309; it was in the fifteenth century that these were replaced by the stone and marble loggias one sees nowadays. In his remodelling, Fra Giovanni respected the architectural language of the existing twelfth-century building but modernised the appearance of the traditional porticoed Gothic structure, in which bare brick surfaces were decorated with pilaster strips and projecting pointed arches. The result of Fra Giovanni's work, with the addition of such classical motifs as fully-rounded arches, reflects that he was active at the dawn of the age of humanism.

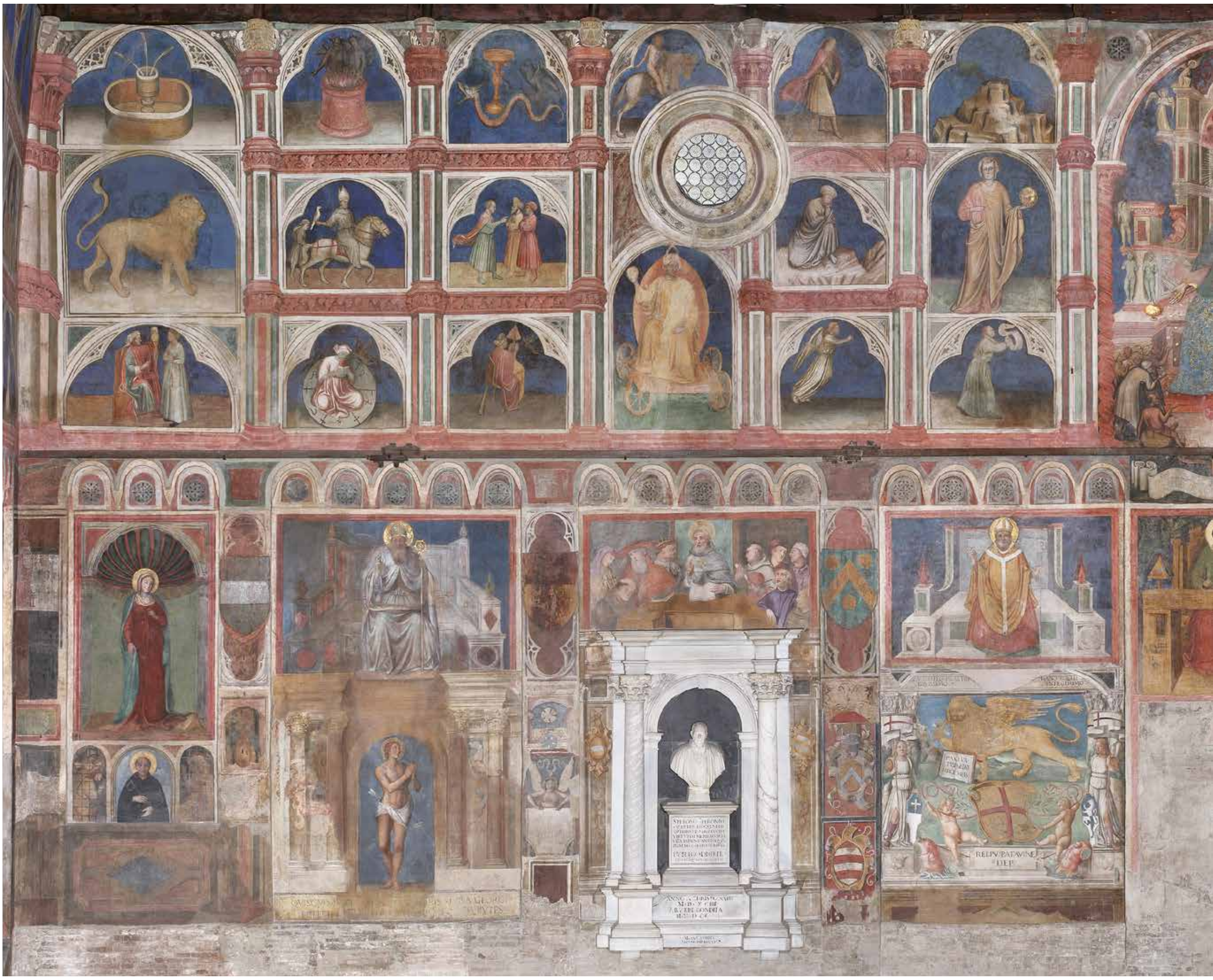

PIAZZA DELL'INSURREZIONE 28 APRILE 1945
PIAZZA GARIBALDI
CORSO MILANO
VIA LIVELLO
VIA DEI LIVELLO
VIA SAN NICOLO
P.TTA S.NICOLO'
VIA DANTE
VIA DELLE PARTI
VIA AQUILEIA
VIA MARTIRI D'UNGHERIA
VIA FLAVIO BUSONERA
VIA EMANUELE FILIBERTO DI SAVOIA
VIA SANTA LUCIA
VIA CAVOUR
VIA FORTUNATO CALVI
PIAZZA CAVOUR
VIA SANTA
VIA NAZARIO SAURO
VIA BREDA
GALL. EZZELINO
VIA DA PADOVA
VIA GORIZIA
VIA DONDI DALL'OROLOGIO
VIA DEI DA CARRARA
VIA PATRIARCATO
PIAZZA CAPITANIATO
VIA ACCADEMIA
VIA SAN CLEMENTE
PIAZZA DEI SIGNORI
PIAZZA DEI FRUTTI
VIA FIUME
VIA MONTE DI PIETA
VOLTO DELLA CORDA
VIA OBERDAN
VIA 8 FEBBRAIO 1848
VIA CESARE
VIA DANIELE MANIN
PIAZZA DELLE ERBE
VIA DEL MUNICIPIO
VIA ARCO VALARESSO
VIA TADI
VIA DUOMO
PIAZZA DEL DUOMO
VIA DOMENICO VANDELLI
VIA DIETRO DUOMO
VIA SAN CANZIANO
VIA OTTO FEBBRAIO
VIA DEI SONCIN
VIA ROMA
VIA SAN
VIA RIVIERA
VIA LIVIO
VIA TITO
VIA DEL VESCOVADO
VIA BONPORTI
VIA FRANCESCO
VIA BARBARIGO
VIA PRATI GIOVANNI
VIA DELL'ARCO
VIA MARSALA
VIA RIALTO


N

Description of the Fresco Cycles

Of all the cycles covered by the nomination, that at the Palazzo della Ragione is the largest in terms of area: all four walls of the vast first-floor hall are entirely occupied by frescoes

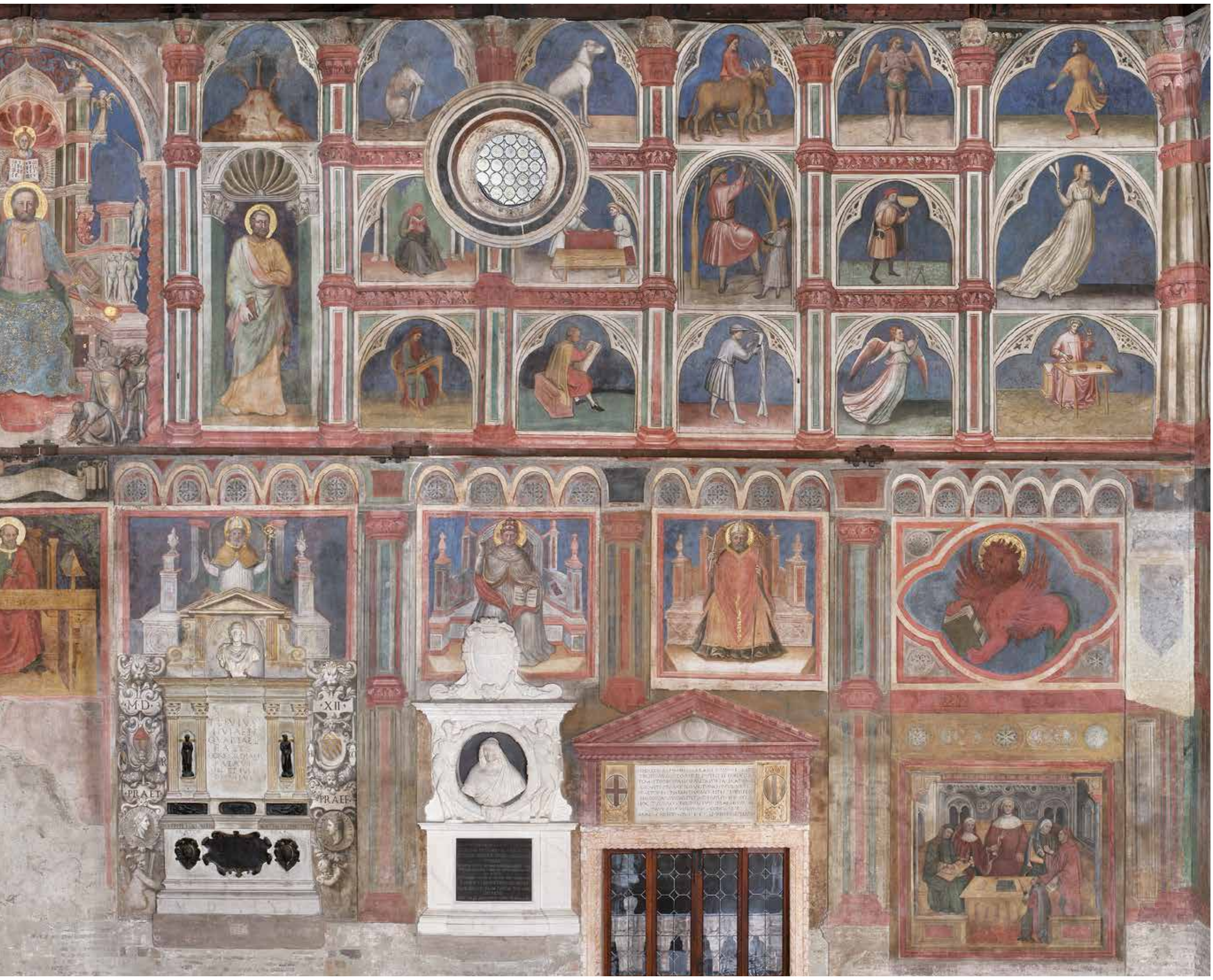
The decoration comprises more than three hundred different scenes divided into two sections. The upper area, which is part of the remodelling which took place in the fifteenth century, contains scenes that develop over three levels and illustrate the correspondence between the months of the years, the signs of the zodiac, and the trades and character traits associated with them. The lower area is less densely decorated and contains parts of the fourteenth-century frescoes; these are probably to be read in relation to the frescoes in the upper zone, but it is also true that their creation was in part inspired by the function of the different spaces into which this hall was once divided. Hence, for example, the frescoes in the lower section are separated by the clearly visible traces left by the tribunal benches



(known as *dischi* or *deschi*) which once lined the walls, and by symbols associated with them - a reminder that the Palazzo once served as the law courts. The Palazzo della Ragione still houses the so-called *Pietra del Vituperio*, a stool of black stone which was located at the middle of the hall in the Middle Ages (it now stands in the north-east corner) and was used for public humiliation of insolvent debtors, who were obliged to sit there as in the stocks.

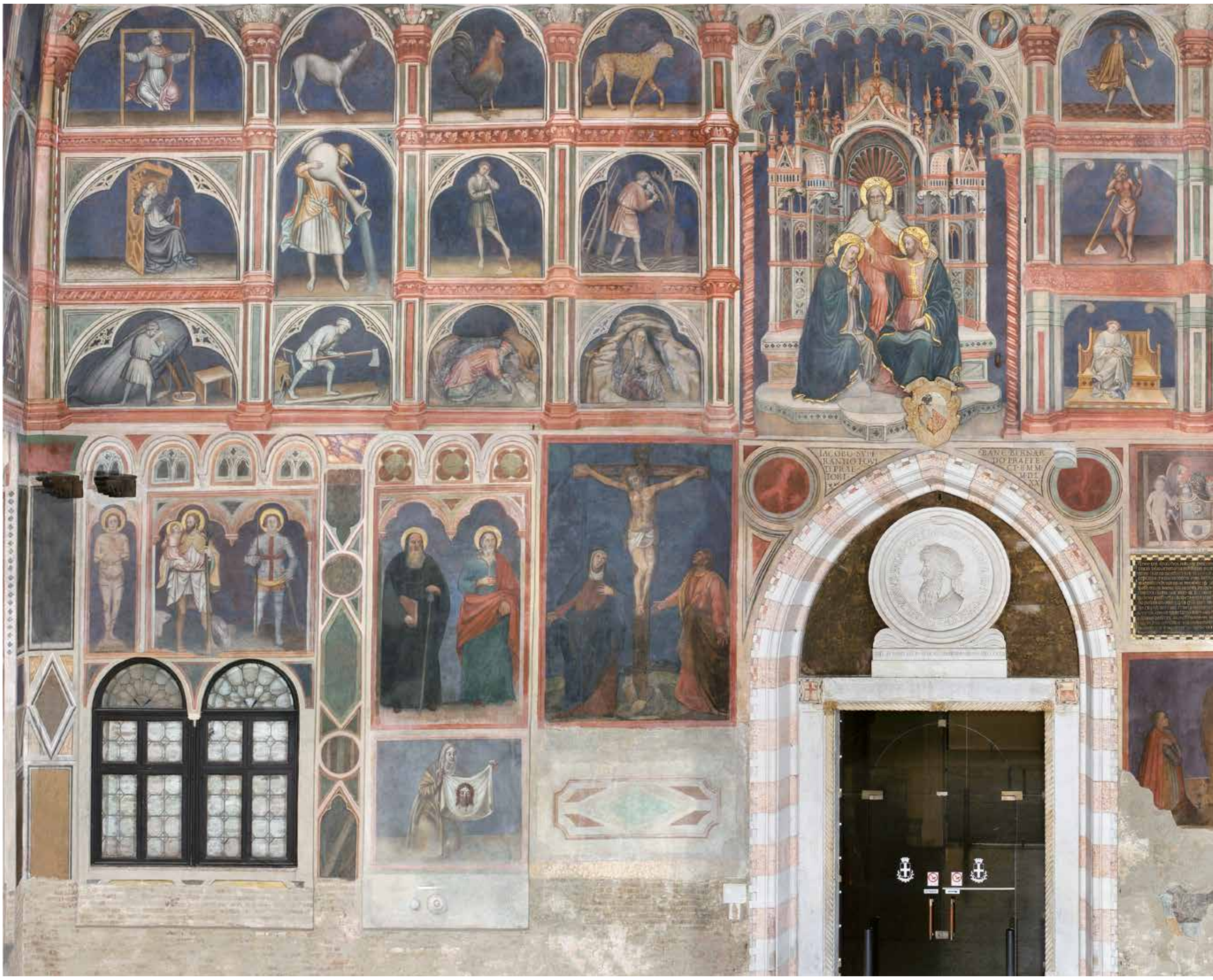
Within the various cycles that make up the nomination, that at the Palazzo Della Ragione is the only one that was the fruit of a secular commission from the civic authorities. Giotto's appointment to do this work came, in fact, from the Commune of Padua some dozen years or so after he completed the frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel, and the work may have been intended as a 'public' response to that 'private' commission. It is no coincidence that after having depicted the *Last Judgement* in the Scrovegni Chapel, the artist was then called upon to decorate the building where secular justice was administered.

Ill. 27, Palazzo della Ragione, west wall



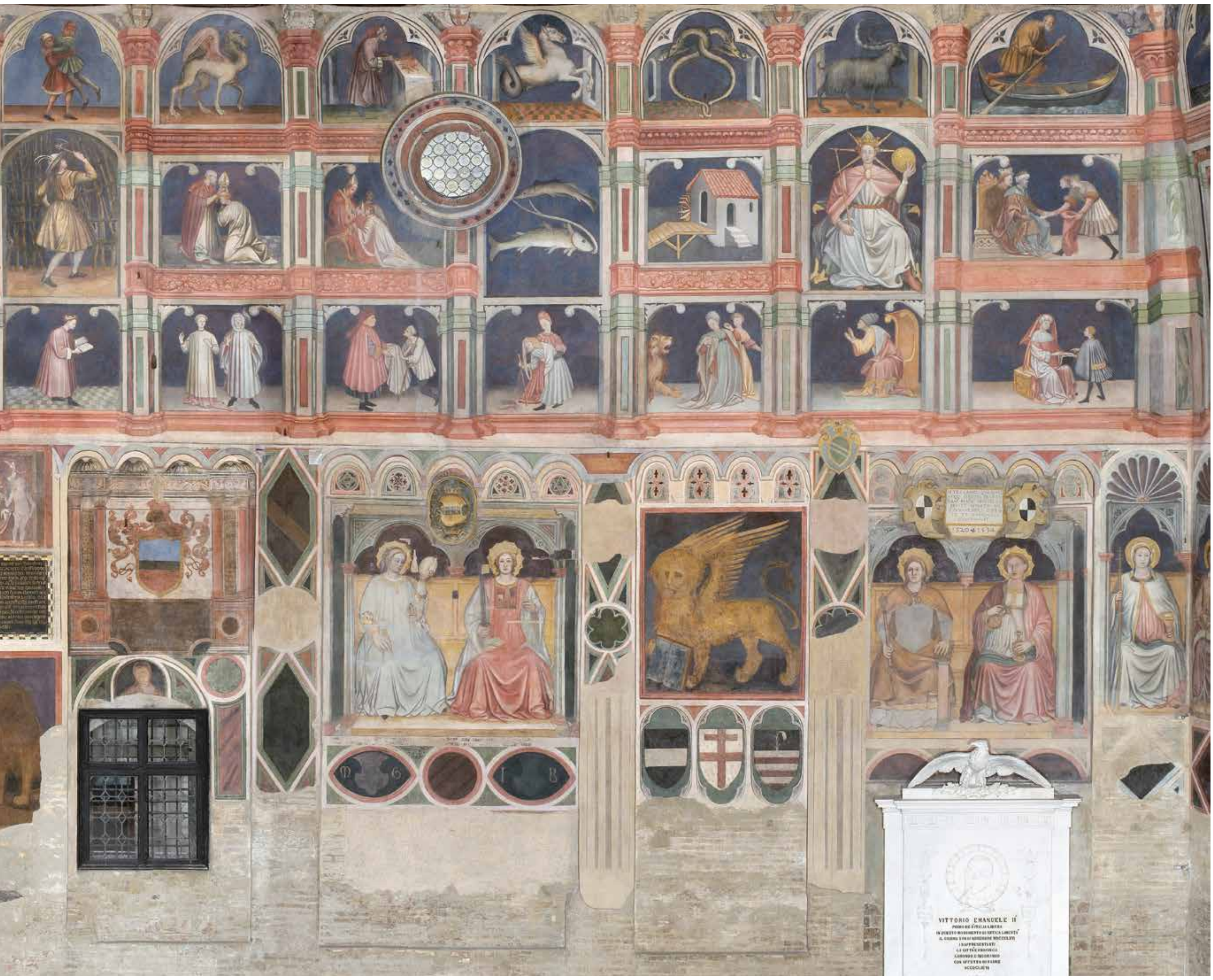
The chronicles of the day speak of a vast cycle of works on an astrological theme (signs of the zodiac, planets and constellation), which were then destroyed in a massive fire some century later. However, that initial iconography was then repeated in a vast cycle which was inspired by judicial astrology and charted the influence of the planets on human affairs and disputes.

An important distinguishing characteristic of this cycle is its subject matter. Here, there are no stories from the Gospels or the Lives of the Saints, but rather a massive secular almanac made up of 333 squares organised at three levels along the upper parts of the walls that run around the entire hall. This cycle depicts the variety of humankind and the various tasks that occupied life in the Middle Ages; it also aimed to remind those who sat in judgement here of the full range of human tendencies and failings. In effect, it provides a panoramic compendium that illustrates the contemporary belief of the day that human behaviour and states of feeling were subject to the influence of the stars.



The entire cycle is organised within a painted architectural structure comprising hexagonal pilasters crossed, in the upper area, by architraves and in the lower area by proscenium openings under architraves resting on corbels. The whole layout is a more elaborate version of the sort of faux architecture that Giotto had already used in the Scrovegni Chapel (component part 1). The reading of the astrological cycle opens as nature begins to awaken in the month of March, which is shown in correspondence with the East and associated with Aries. This is the starting-point for a scheme that is divided into twelve sections, corresponding to the months of the year, each of which is shown complete with: the sign of the zodiac; the constellation or ascendant that determines the character of those born under the related sign of the zodiac, the apostle associated with that month; a personification of the month; the planet that resides in the associated sign of the zodiac; the influences the corresponding sign exerts on a person's character; the work performed during that month.

Ill. 28, Palazzo della Ragione, east wall



Plan of the Fresco Cycles in the Palazzo della Ragione

Legend

Fresco cycle on the upper area of the walls

South Wall

1 MARCH: **1a** *St. Andrew, the constellation of Hercules and Heron, Aries, March, Mars, fishmongers/ warrior*
2 APRIL: **2a** *St. James the Greater, Constellation of Cepheus, Cassiopeia, Andromeda, Taurus, April, Venus, rebirth of nature/amorous scenes*
3 RELIGOUS IMAGES: **3a** *St. John, The Madonna and Child, kneeling friar, woman praying, Theology, The Blood of Christ, fortified building, Peace, Adoration of the Lamb, The Shedding of Christ's Blood, The Crucifixion, Holy Mass, The Hebrew Sacrifice of the Lamb, God the Father*
4 MAY: **4a** *St. Philip, Constellation of Equus Minor, Gemini, May, Mercury, Alchemy and the occult sciences/ rebellion*
5 JUNE: **5a** *St. Bartholomew, Constellation of Centaur and Plaustrum, Cancer, June, Moon, sea voyages/oriental scenes*

South/West Wall

6 JULY: **6a** *The Sun, Constellation of the Plough and the Dragon, St. Matthew, Leo, July, Sun, fame and glory/ excessive self-assertion*
B *The Charity of St. Mark the Evangelist*
7 AUGUST: **7a** *St. Thomas, Constellation of Canis Majoris, Sirius and Boves oratorii, Virgo, August, Mercury, intellectual labours, the liberal arts/ grammar, dialect and philosophy*

North Wall

8 SEPTEMBER: **8a** *St. James the Lesser, Constellation of the Serpent, Libra, September, Venus, balance/vanity*
9 OCTOBER: **9a** *St. Simon, Constellation of Plaustrum and the Bear, Scorpio, October, Mars, blacksmiths, craftsmen/ aggression*
10 NOVEMBER: **10a** *St. Judas Thaddeus, Constellation of Centaur, Sagittarius, November, Jove, hunting activities/ behavioural excesses*
11 DECEMBER: **11a** *St. Matthew, Constellation of Lira, Corona Borealis, Serpens Caput, Aquila and Camel (Ursa Minor), Capricorn, December, Saturn, hunting activities/wantonness*

South/East Wall

12 JANUARY: **12a** *St. Peter, Constellation of Cygnus, Flavius, Canis Latrans, Chicken and Leopard, St. Peter, Aquarius, January, Saturn, mechanical and manual crafts/sadness and the contemplative life*
A *The Coronation of the Virgin*
13 FEBRUARY: *Constellation of Ara, Pegasus, Capella and Argo Navis, St. Andrew, Pisces, February, Jove, priesthood and faith/play and otium*

Fresco cycle on the lower area of the walls

South Wall

Patron saints of the city, the Virtues, allegorical figures and scenes linked to the theme of Justice and the symbols of various tribunals:
14 *Hope and Charity*; **15** *Eagle;* **16** *Bear;* **17** *Peacock;* **18** *Pig;* **19** *She-goat; St. Francis, St. Dominic, Woman offering a lemon tree branch with fruit, St. Anthony of Padua, the Judgement of Solomon,* **20** *Daniel the Prophet;* **21** *Fox;* **22** *Wolf;* **23** *St. Thomas;* **24** *Camel;* **25** *Two-headed dragon*

West Wall

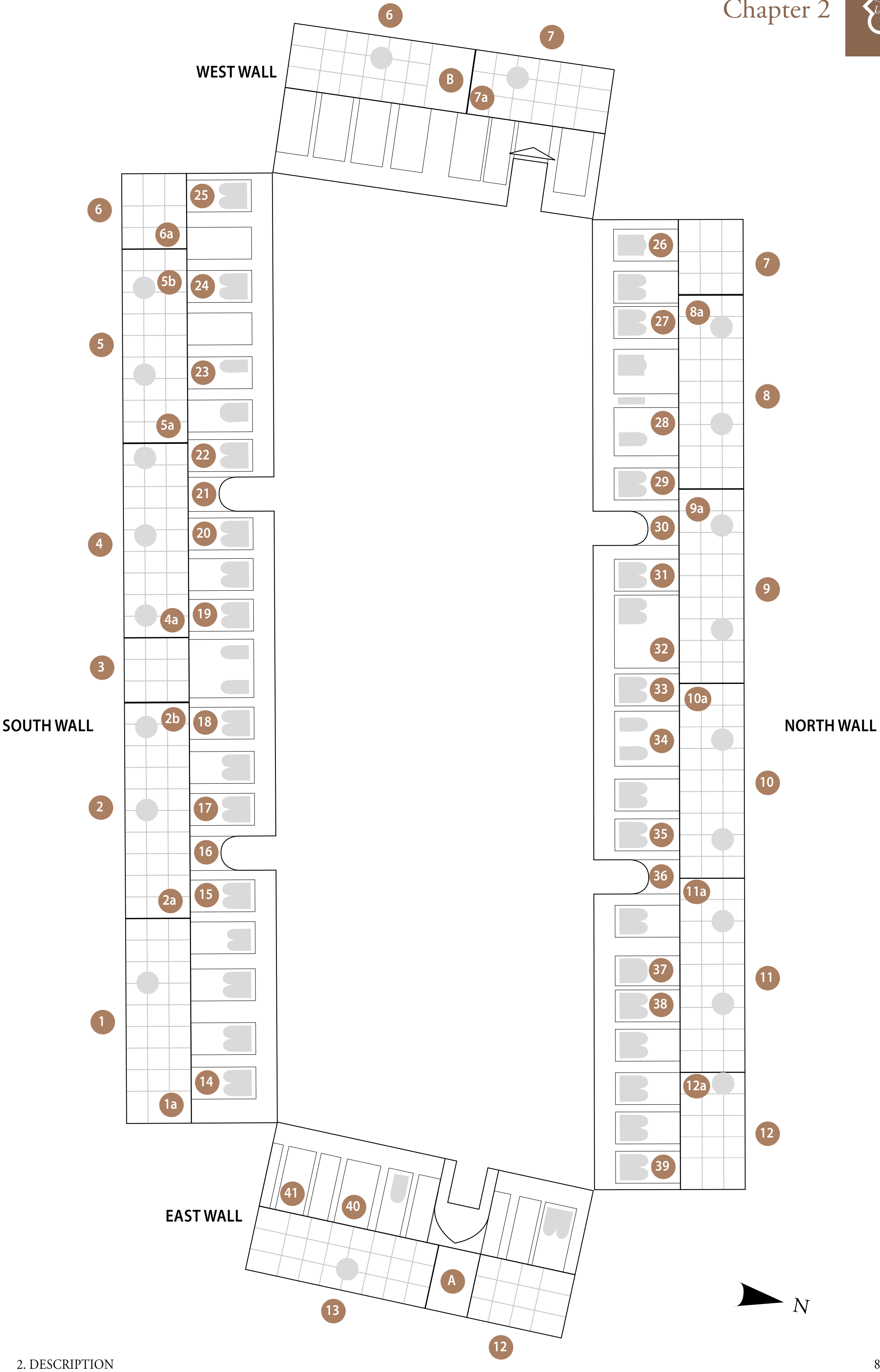
Patron saints of the city, the Virtues, allegorical figures and scenes linked to the theme of Justice:
The Holy Virgin Mary, St. Benedict, a Bishop, St. Sebastian, St. Thomas in cathedra, a Bishop, The Crest of St. Mark, St. Paul, a Bishop, St. Gregory the Great, a Bishop and the Trial of Pietro d'Abano

North Wall

Patron saints of the city, the Virtues, allegorical figures and scenes linked to the theme of Justice and the symbols of various tribunals:
26 *Winged dragon and the Lion of St. Mark;* **27** *Lion;* **28** *Ox and putti bearing shields;* **29** *Deer;* **30** *St. Giustina;* **31** *Leopard, Lion of St. Mark;* **32** *Dragon;* **33** *Horse;* **34** *Law;* **35** *St. Prosdocimus;* **36** *Justice, Crests, Padua's Coat-of-Arms;* **37** *Unicorn;* **38** *St. Jerome, St. Basil;* **39** *Two-headed dragon*

East Wall

Patron saints of the city, the Virtues, allegorical figures and scenes linked to the theme of Justice and the symbols of various tribunals: *St. Sebastian, St. Christopher, St. George, St. Anthony Abbot and another saint, Saint Veronica, the Crucifixion, Crest with the Virgin, a member of the Carraresi family paying homage to Venice;* **40** *Prudence, Justice, the Lion of St. Mark;* **41** *Strength, Temperance and Faith*


WEST WALL
B
7a
6a
5b
5a
4a
SOUTH WALL
2b
2a
1a
8a
9a
NORTH WALL
EAST WALL
A
N

Separated by the animals, which identified the different tribunals and courts, the allegories and figures of saints in the lower area were intended to represent the divine grace which guides human nature. Dating from the late fourteenth century, the *Judgement of Solomon* was a reminder of the proverbial wisdom of that biblical king, a virtue that was supposed to be possessed by all judges.

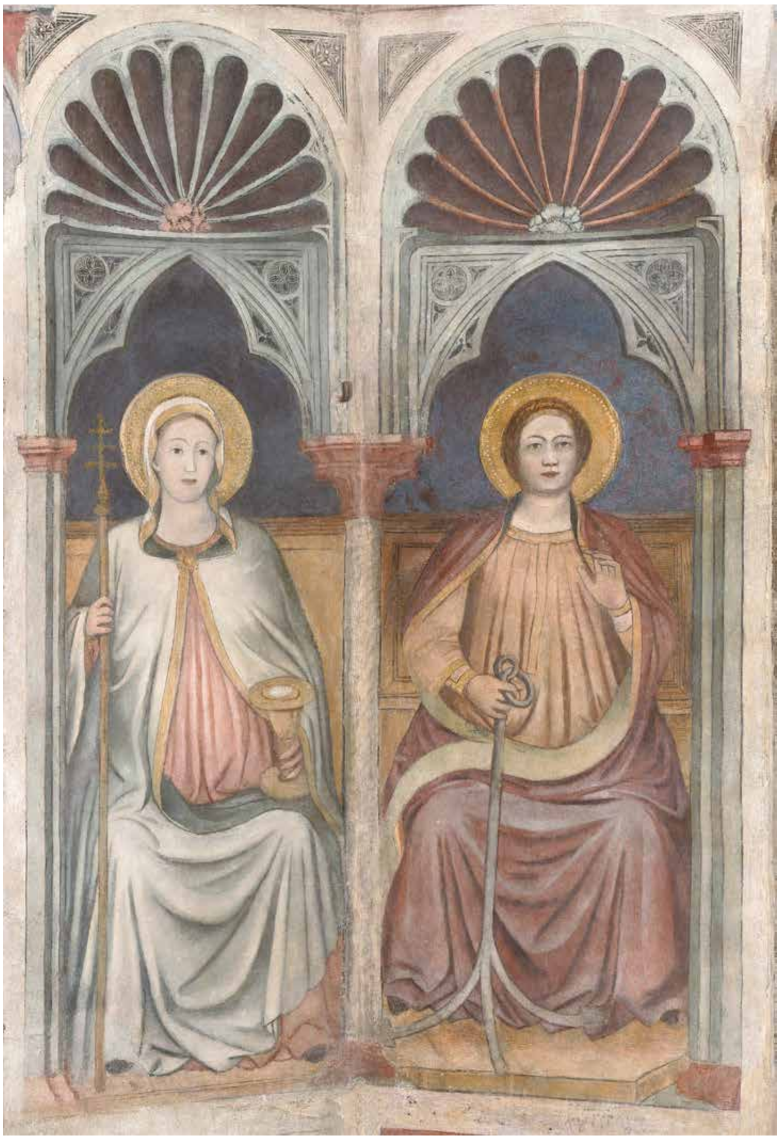
Other extant fourteenth-century parts are the so-called *Trial of Pietro d'Abano* and *The Virtues*. The former is of particular interest because the defendant depicted seems to be the very physician and astrologer who, in collaboration with Giotto, decided the iconography of the decoration within the Palazzo della Ragione. It also provides a realistic account of what a fourteenth-century courtroom must have looked like, complete with various interesting details. This work has recently been attributed to Jacopo da Verona, who produced the fresco cycle in the Oratory of St. Michael (component part 4), which is the latest work in the series of frescoes covered by the nomination and shows the same careful attention to the rendering of details.

For their part, the *Virtues* were once attributed to Giusto de' Menabuoi (now to Antonio di Pietro) another leading fresco artist in fourteenth-century Padua, whose works figure in component parts 1 and 2 within the nomination.

"[There are] the twelve constellations of the Zodiac and the seven planets with associated characteristics […] all in marvellous frescoes by Giotto, the greatest of painters; and [there are] other stars and planets in gold, with their symbols […]": this was how, writing sometime between 1314 and 1318, Giovanni da Nono described the cycle of astrological frescoes in the Palazzo della Ragione. And even though that work was destroyed by the fire of February 1420, the layout and iconography of Giotto's original inspired the decorations painted after that disaster, which we can still see today.

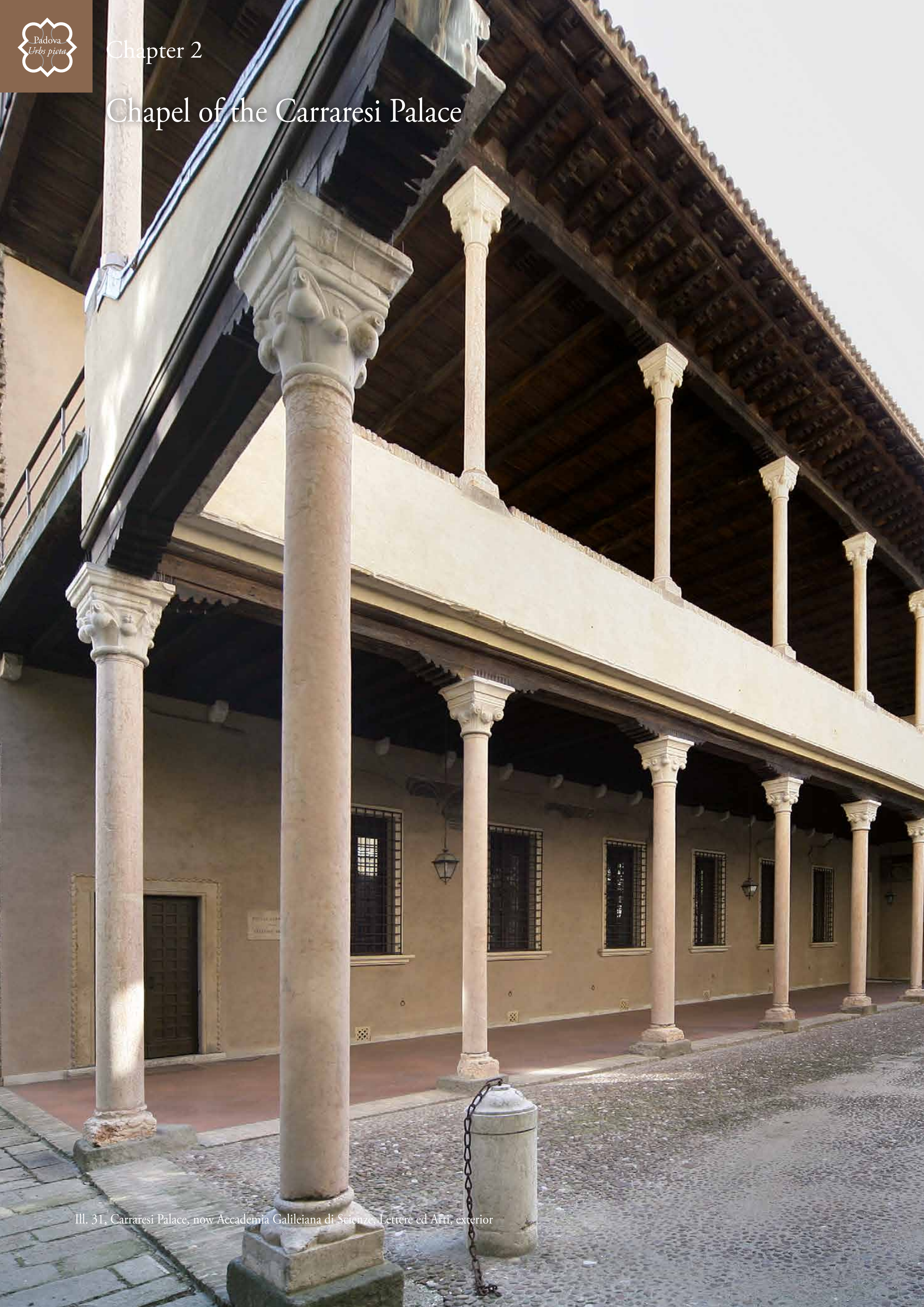
Ill. 29, Antonio di Pietro (?), *Faith and Hope*, Palazzo della Ragione

Ill. 30, Jacopo da Verona (?), *The Trial of Pietro d'Abano*, Palazzo della Ragione

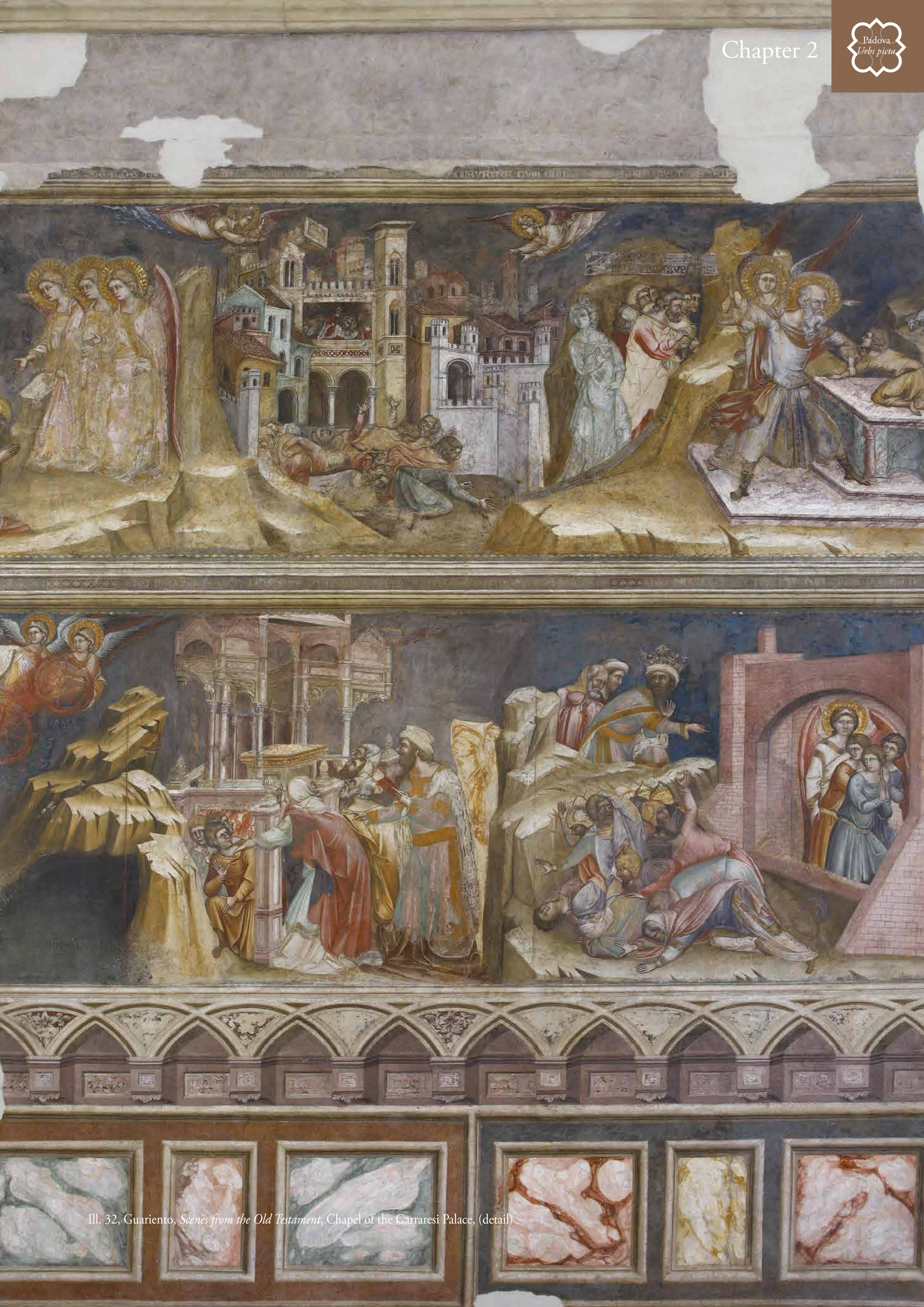


Chapter 2

Chapel of the Carraresi Palace



Ill. 31, Carraresi Palace, now Accademia Galileiana di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, exterior



Ill. 32, Guariento, *Scenes from the Old Testament*, Chapel of the Carraresi Palace, (detail)

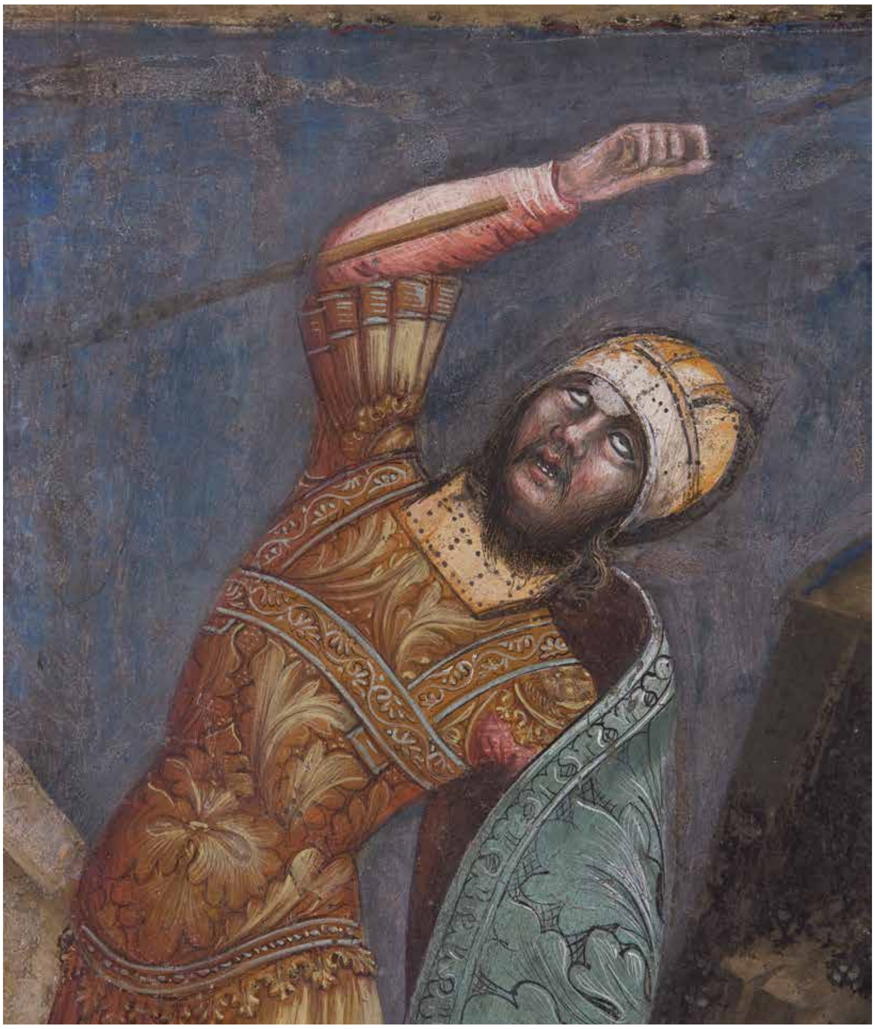
Chapel of the Carraresi Palace

Description of the Building

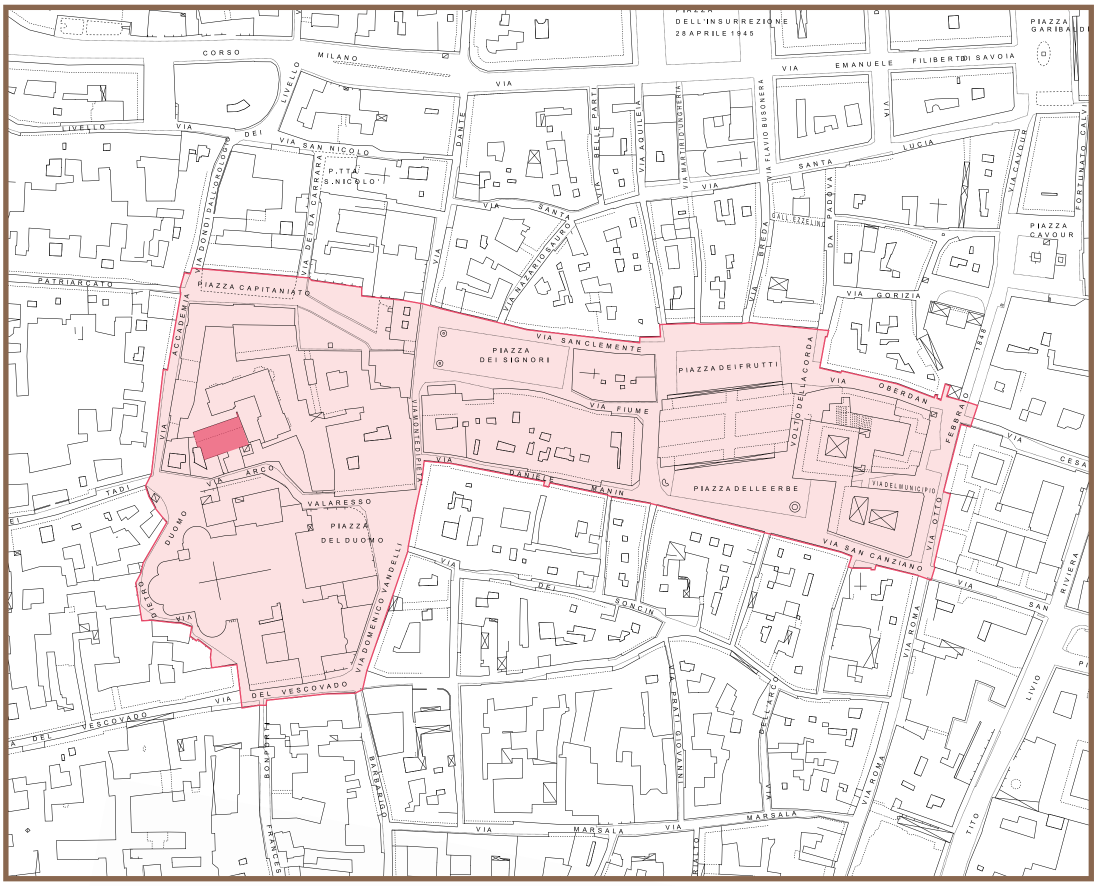
The Carraresi loggia is the still intact part of the Carraresi Palace, a walled complex of buildings, which, in its day, formed a veritable fortified citadel within the city itself.

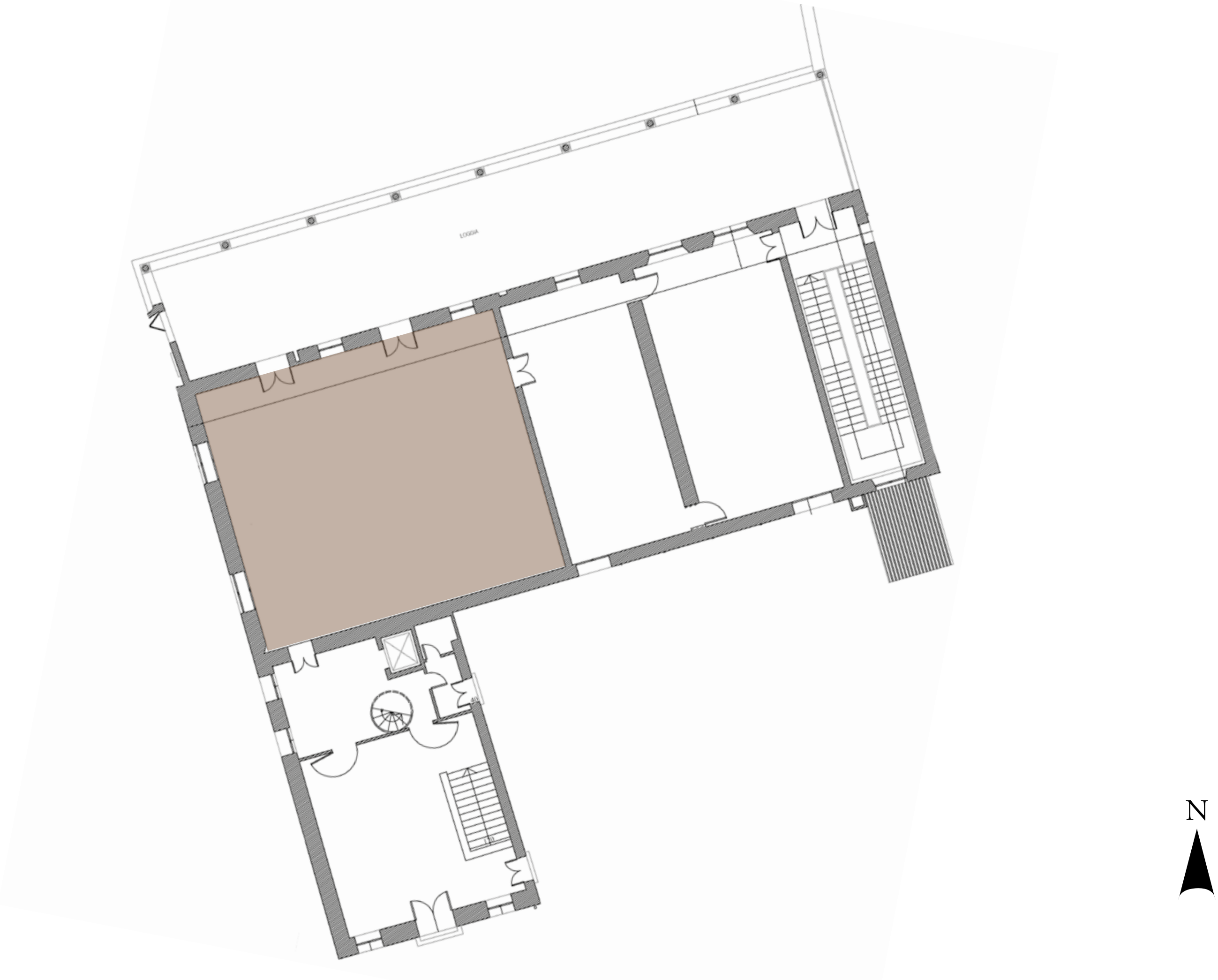
As it stands nowadays, the structure has an elegant double loggia, dating from the fourteenth century, and houses a Library on the ground floor along with a Meeting Chamber which was once the Carraresi Chapel and is still decorated with the original Guariento frescoes.

Studies have shown that the chapel was a rather small elongated room which was decorated not only with frescoes on the walls but also with a highly original ceiling, whose decoration comprised a series of painted panels; a good part of these are now in the Musei Civici agli Eremitani and depict *The Madonna and Child*, The *Evangelists* and *Angels*. The chapel, therefore, was a treasure-chest of artistic riches whose refinement made it a perfect setting for court ritual and ceremonies.



Ill. 33, Guariento, *The Dying Goliath*, Chapel of the Carraresi Palace (detail)


PIAZZA DELL'INSURREZIONE 28 APRILE 1945
PIAZZA GARIBALDI
CORSO MILANO
VIA LIVELLO
VIA DEI
VIA SAN NICOLO
P.TTA S.NICOLO
VIA DANTE
VIA DELLE PART
VIA AQUILEIA
VIA MARTIRI D'UNGHERIA
VIA FLAVIO BUSONERA
VIA EMANUELE FILIBERTO DI SAVOIA
VIA CAVOUR
VIA FORTUNATO CALVI
VIA SANTA LUCIA
PIAZZA CAVOUR
VIA DONDI DALL'OROLOGIO
VIA DEI DA CARRARA
VIA NAZARIO SAURO
VIA SANTA
VIA BREDA
VIA DA PADOVA
GALL. EZZELINO
VIA GORIZIA
PATRIARCATO
PIAZZA CAPITANIATO
VIA ACCADEMIA
VIA SAN CLEMENTE
PIAZZA DEI SIGNORI
PIAZZA DEI FRUTTI
VOLTO DELLA CORDA
VIA OBERDAN
VIA VIII FEBBRAIO
1848
VIA CESARE
VIA MONTE DI PIETÀ
VIA FIUME
VIA DANIELE MANIN
PIAZZA DELLE ERBE
VIA DEL MUNICIPIO
VIA ARCO VALARESSO
VIA TADI
VIA DUOMO
PIAZZA DEL DUOMO
VIA DOMENICO VANDELLI
VIA DIETRO DUOMO
VIA DEI SONCIN
VIA SAN CANZIANO
VIA OTTO
VIA ROMA
RIVIERA SAN
VIA LIVIO
TITO
VIA DEL VESCOVADO
VIA BONPORTI
VIA FRANCESCO
VIA BARBARIGO
VIA PRATI GIOVANNI
VIA DELL'ARCO
VIA MARSALA
RIALTO


LOGGIA
N

Description of the Fresco Cycle

Now home to the Accademia Galileiana di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, the extant parts of the Carraresi Palace have retained parts of the non-figurative decoration in the ground-floor room and a precious cycle of fresco decoration in the former chapel.

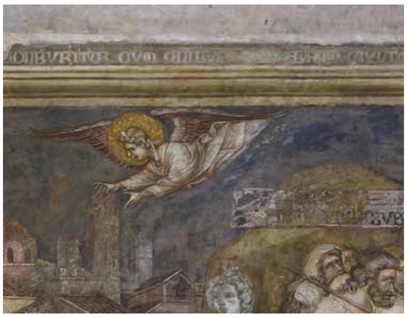
The non-figurative decoration is significant not only because of the variety to be seen in these remains but also because some features - such as the 'tiled wall' motif that can be traced back to Islamic art - were introduced into the Padua area by Giotto and those influenced by him. One can also see heraldic crests and chariots, the armorial bearings of the Carraresi family, elegant foliage and crowns, and faux arched recesses resting on corbels in the form of female heads. Both refined and rich in detail, this decoration was clearly designed to impress all visitors to the palace with a sense of the power exercised by the Carraresi rulers of the city.

The other important frescoes are to be found in the former chapel, which now serves as a Meeting Chamber: on the northern wall there are scenes from the Old Testament painted by Guariento, along with two detached fresco scenes now hanging on the opposite south wall.

Included among the cycles covered by the nomination, these Guariento frescoes are the first examples of works by a court painter that are clearly to be seen in relation to a commission from the rulers of Padua. All of the city's fresco cycles are narrative in inspiration, but here that narrative takes on a decidedly courtly flavour, resulting in a very personal interpretation of the fresco tradition initiated by Giotto.

In these Palace Chapel works, Guariento further develops his exploration of perspective, showing ever greater attention to the detailed rendering of both Gothic architectural features and the furnishings within each individual scene. The artist introduces here a new way of storytelling: each episode is no longer isolated within an individual frame but rather linked together with other scenes within a single space. The narrative sequence thus forms an unbroken flow. However, the composition of the whole still maintains an overall geometrical layout. The biblical scenes come above a tall dado in faux marble (clearly reminiscent of Giotto's work) that ends in a series of deep-looking faux arched recesses that rest upon corbels. This latter feature reveals the artist's clear command of the spatial illusions that can be created through the use of perspective.

The narrative unfolds along two levels separated by deep cornices that bear inscriptions in gothic script (still partially legible) which identify each individual scene. Overall, one does not have the impression of a narrative recounted across a flat wall but incidents set within a precisely defined space - a lesson learnt



Ill. 34, Guariento, *Noah blessed of the Lord*, Chapel of the Carraresi Palace (detail)

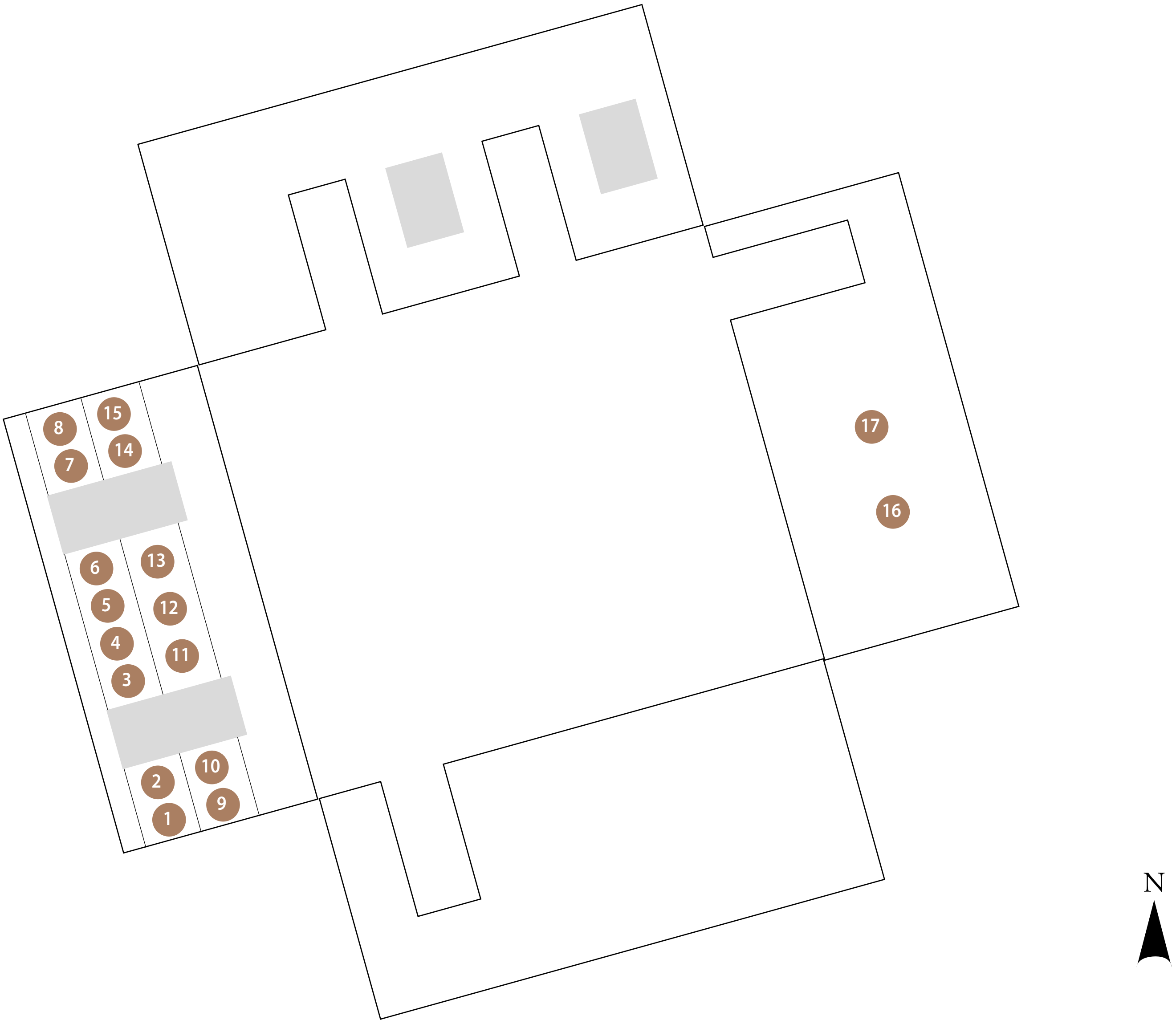
Plan of the Fresco Cycle in the Carraresi Chapel

Legend

From the left, upper level:
1 *Noah blessed by the Lord*
2 *The Drunkenness of Noah*
3 *Abraham and the three Angels*
4 *The Destruction of Gomorrah*
5 *Lot's Wife turned to a Pillar of Salt*
6 *Abraham and Isaac*
7 *Joseph recounts his dream to Jacob and to his brothers*
8 *Joseph sold to the merchants of Madian*

From the left, lower level:
9 *David and Goliath*
10 *The Judgement of Solomon*
11 *Elisha defended by the Army of Angels*
12 *Daniel's companions refuse to worship the golden statue*
13 *The three children in the furnace saved by an angel*
14 *Daniel in the Lions' den, Judith and Holofernes*

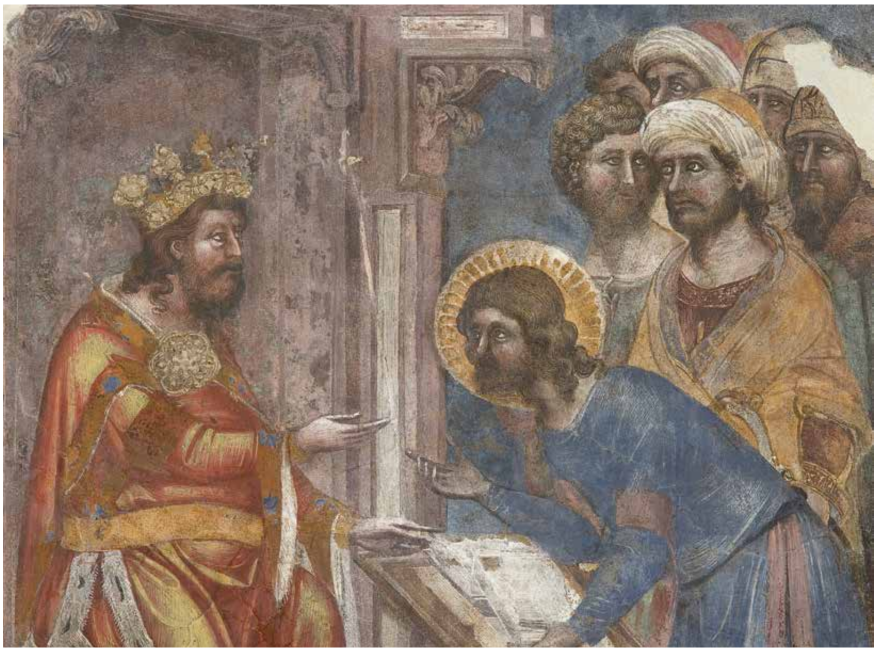
Two detached frescoes now hanging on the opposite wall:
15 *Adam and Eve before God the Father*
16 *Joseph explains the Pharaoh's Dream*



from Giotto's work in the Scrovegni Chapel (component part 1).

The episodes are set against the background of a blue sky broken by precisely modelled rocks that give a sense of depth. Within this landscape setting stand cities whose walls, towers and palaces are all rendered with great attention to architectural detail and precise handling of volume.

Painted for a courtly setting, the works are so vivid that they transform these biblical scenes into contemporary chronicles: the architecture and the elegant clothes are clearly fourteenth-century; the individual figures are closely observed and their gestures captured with all the precision of a photograph; there is minute attention to detail in the depiction of plants, flowers and animals. One of the most striking novelties in the images is the rich tent within which one sees the dead Holofernes, the opulence being what contemporaries might have expected of a fourteenth-century nobleman. Even in the most violent scenes the artist makes full use of vivid colour to delight the observer: see, for example, *Joseph sold to the Merchants of Madian* or *Judith and Holofernes*, in which the heroine, wearing a finely-embroidered cap, is dressed in a magnificent gown of yellow shot through with mauve highlights. Perhaps this latter episode is the one in which one sees most fully the fruits of Giotto's decision to place biblical narrative within a contemporary setting - a lesson which would inspire artists throughout the fourteenth century and result in works of remarkable beauty. As further examples of this development one might cite *Joseph Interpreting Pharaoh's Dream*, where Joseph is shown reading an illuminated manuscript at a desk set before a fourteenth-century loggia, or *Adam and Eve before God the Father*, where the depiction of our first parents in a flower-studded garden reveals close attention to individual characterization.

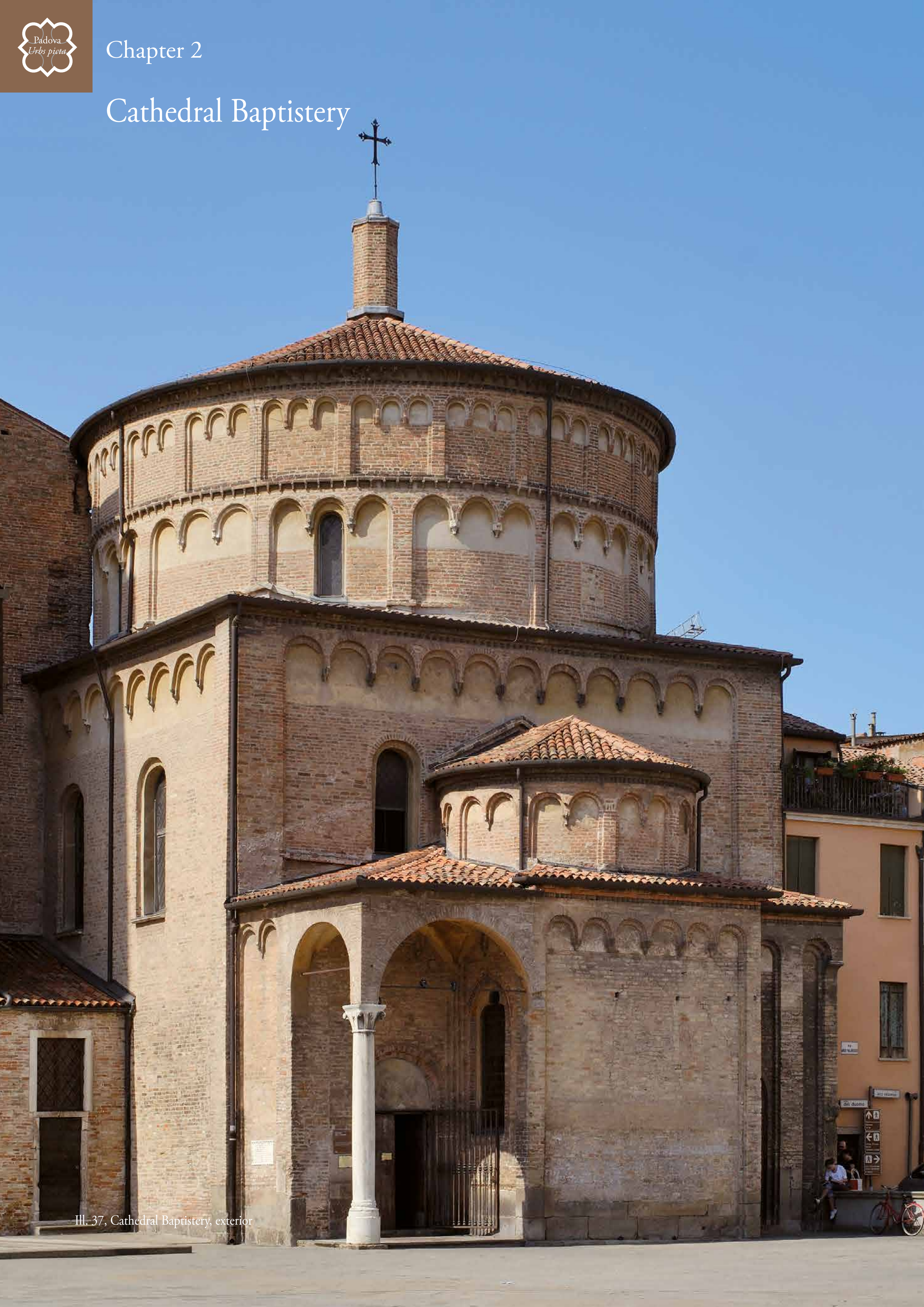


Ill. 35, Guariento, *Joseph explains the Pharaoh's Dream*, Chapel of the Carraresi Palace (detail)

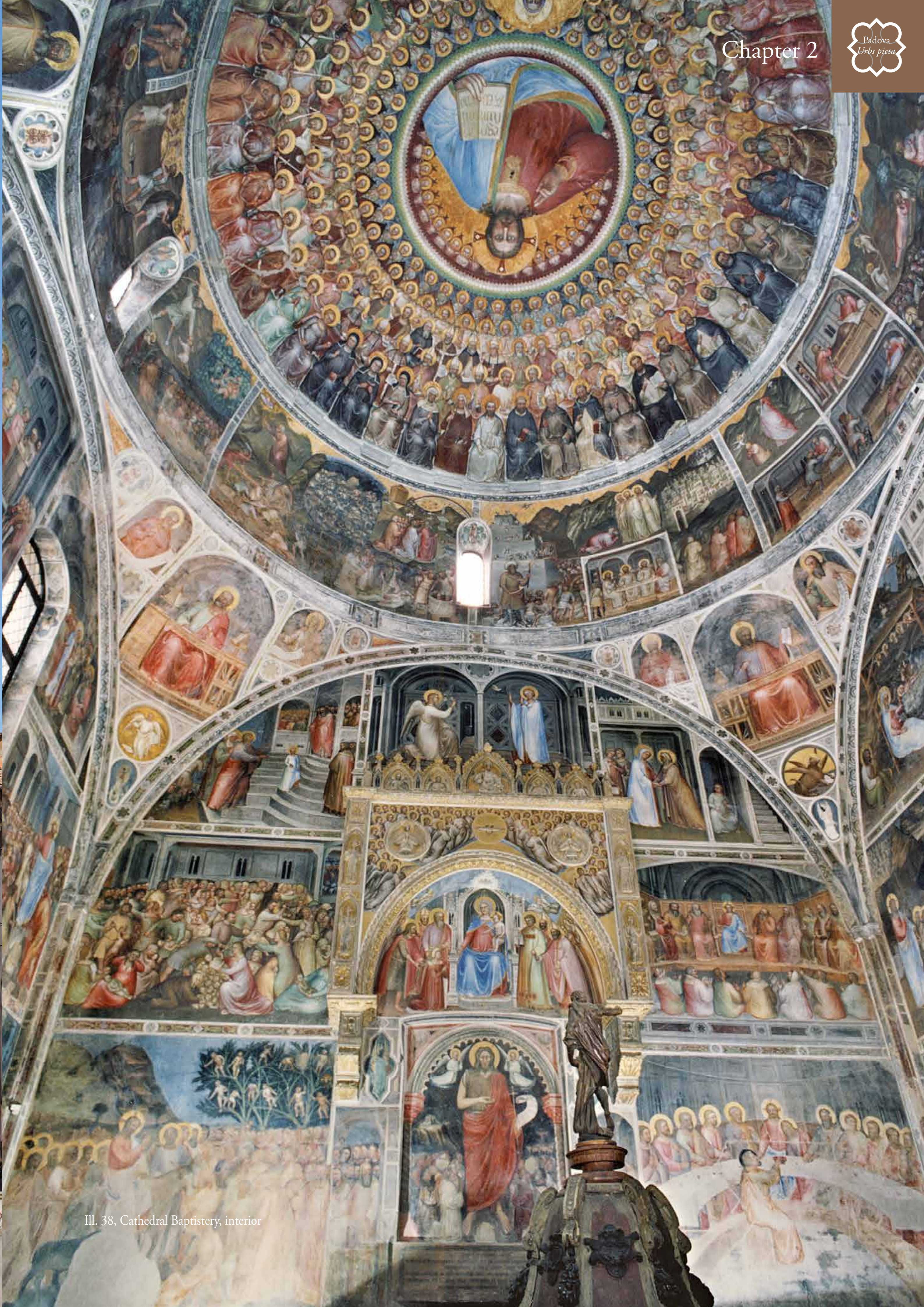
Ill. 36, Guariento, *Judith and Holofernes*, Chapel of the Carraresi Palace (detail)

Chapter 2

Cathedral Baptistery



Ill. 37, Cathedral Baptistery, exterior



Ill. 38, Cathedral Baptistery, interior

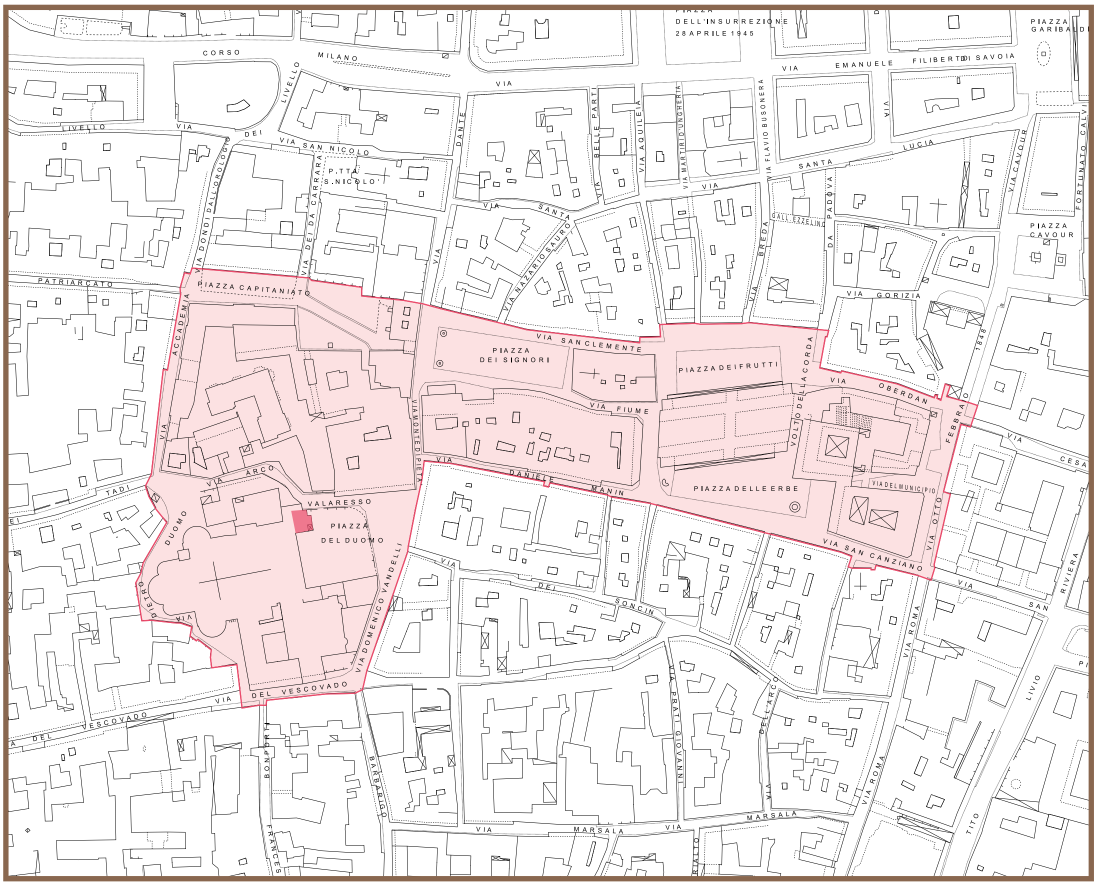
Cathedral Baptistery

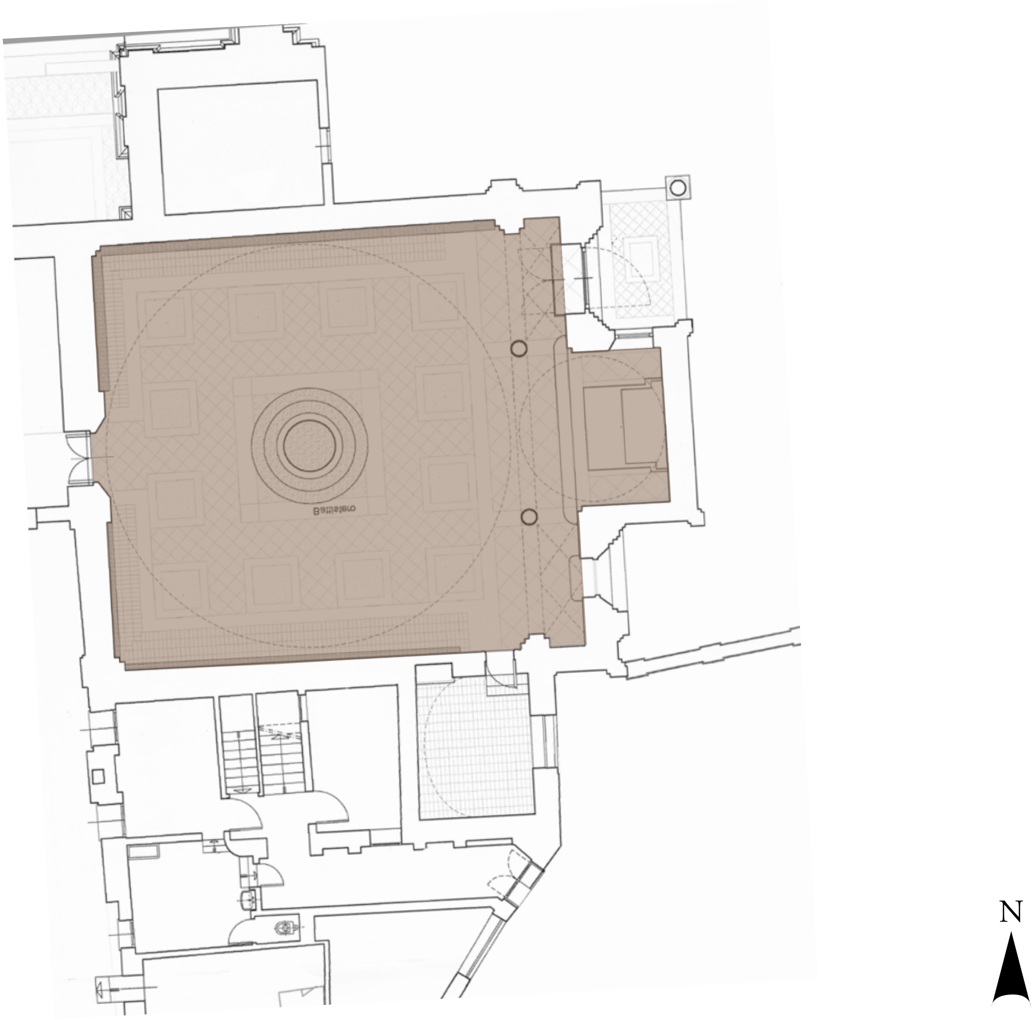
Description of the Building

The Cathedral Baptistery stands in the religious heart of the city, an area close to what was once the site of the buildings of the Carraresi Palace complex; backing onto the south-west corner of the Cathedral itself, it faces onto Piazza del Duomo.

Ultimately used as a mausoleum, the structure has a square floor plan, is surmounted by a cupola and has a small apse on the east wall. The large single space is linked to that apse by a small transept. The cupola is inspired by the interior of the Basilica del Santo, which served as a model in both a formal and symbolic sense: it too is a mausoleum, given it houses the tomb of St. Anthony of Padua.

The interior of the Baptistery is entirely decorated with frescoes, and in the past this was also true of part of the exterior walls. One can still see traces of plant-motif decoration outside, under the cornice with triple-lintel arched recesses on the east wall. Other parts of the external frescoes have been removed and are now in the nearby Museo Diocesano; however, on the east wall one can still see the outline of a scene depicting *The Samaritan Woman at the Well*. Originally, access to the building was through a doorway in the west wall (the entrance surmounted by the tomb of the woman who commissioned the frescoes: Fina Buzzaccarini), but nowadays one enters through a small door in the east wall. The building itself could be the fruit of remodelling work carried out in the mid-thirteenth century and we know that the baptistery itself was consecrated by Guido, the Patriarch of Grado, in 1281. Almost certainly, the structure then underwent further modification in the second half of the fourteenth century, when various windows in the drum of the cupola were bricked in whilst work proceeded on the fresco cycle.


PIAZZA DELL'INSURREZIONE 28 APRILE 1945
CORSO MILANO
VIA EMANUELE FILIBERTO DI SAVOIA
PIAZZA GARIBALDI
VIA LIVELLO
VIA DEI LIVELLO
VIA SAN NICOLÒ
P.TTA S. NICOLÒ
VIA DANTE
VIA DELLE PARTI
VIA AQUILEIA
VIA MARTIRI D'UNGHERIA
VIA FLAVIO BUSONERA
VIA SANTA LUCIA
VIA CAVOUR
VIA FORTUNATO CALVI
PIAZZA CAVOUR
VIA DONDI DALL'OROLOGIO
VIA DEI DA CARRARA
VIA SANTA
VIA NAZARIO SAURO
VIA BREDA
VIA DA PADOVA
GALL. EZZELINO
VIA GORIZIA
PATRIARCATO
PIAZZA CAPITANIATO
VIA SAN CLEMENTE
PIAZZA DEI SIGNORI
PIAZZA DEI FRUTTI
VIA OBERDAN
VIA 8 FEBBRAIO 1848
VIA ACCADEMIA
VIA MONTE DI PIETÀ
VIA FIUME
VOLTO DELLA CORDA
VIA CESARE
VIA DANIELE MANIN
PIAZZA DELLE ERBE
VIA DEL MUNICIPIO
VIA ARCO VALARESSO
VIA TADI
VIA DUOMO
PIAZZA DEL DUOMO
VIA DIETRO DUOMO
VIA DOMENICO VANDELLI
VIA SAN CANZIANO
VIA OTTO FEBBRAIO
VIA DEI SONCIN
VIA ROMA
VIA SAN
RIVIERA
VIA DEL VESCOVADO
VIA BONPORTI
VIA BARBARIGO
VIA PRATI GIOVANNI
VIA DELL'ARCO
VIA MARSALA
VIA TITO LIVIO
VIA FRANCESCO
VIA RIALTO


Battistero
N

Description of the Fresco Cycle

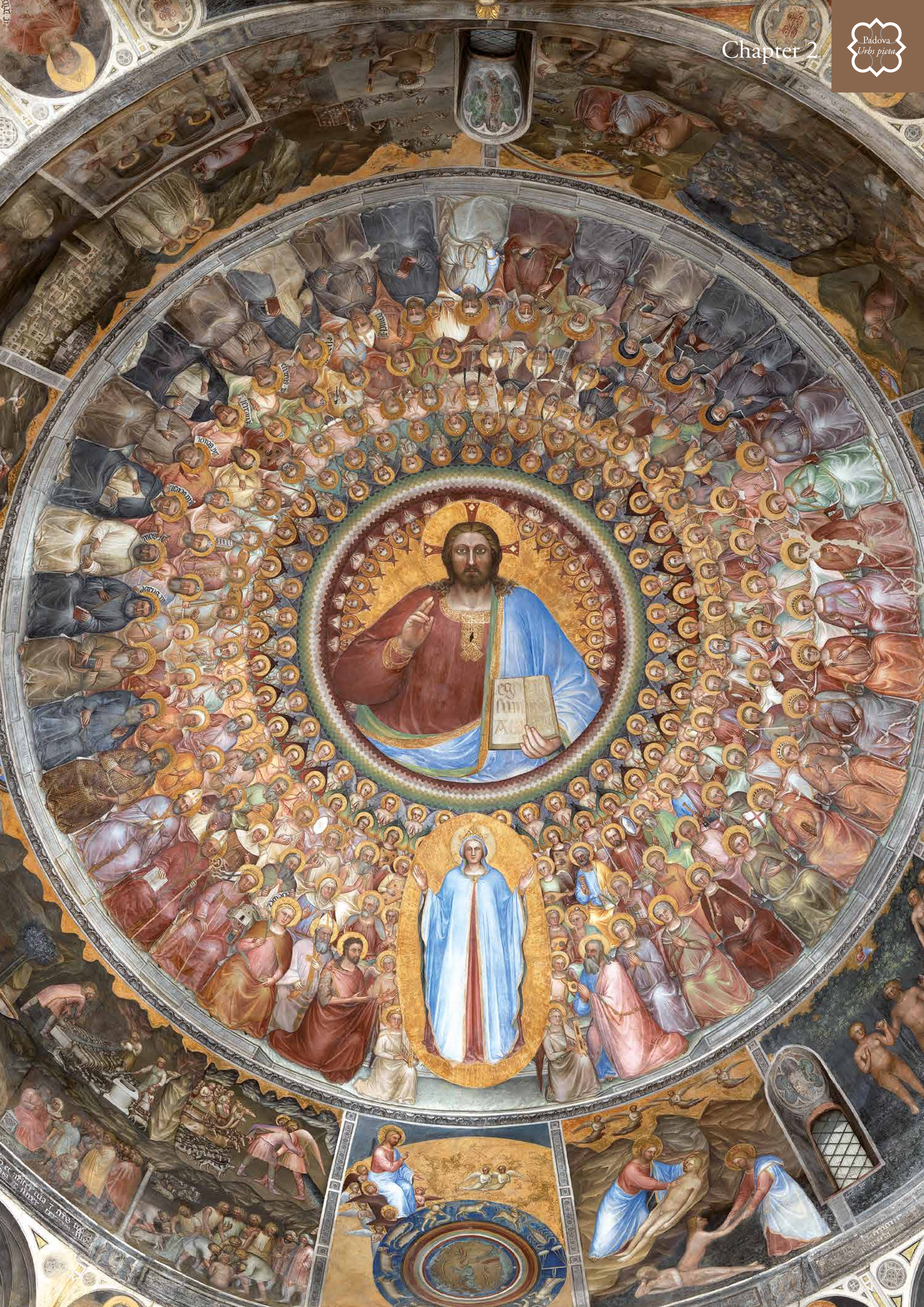
The entire space within the baptistery is given over to rich frescoes inspired by the *History of Human Salvation*. This cycle is the masterpiece of Giusto de' Menabuoi, and within the works covered by the nomination it shows further developments in the use of perspective to create the illusion of three-dimensional space: the division between architecture, painting and sculpture is undercut, so that the space occupied by the viewer is the same as that within which the narrative unfolds. Every single inch of the wall surface is decorated and, when necessary, the scene depicted does not come to an end at the edge of the wall itself but carries on over a portion of pilaster or overflows onto the wall which is at right angles to it. Thus, the frescoes cover architectural spaces that are not usually occupied by such decoration - for example, the intrados of arches - and by unfolding over different walls they heighten the illusion that pictorial and real space are one.

Painted cornices of faux marble partially subdivide the episodes of biblical history, which themselves are depicted in deeply complex spaces. As far as the scenes from the Old Testament are concerned, one might draw some parallels with the mosaics in St. Mark's in Venice, various illuminated codices and, obviously, the Scrovegni Chapel cycle (component part 1). Moving to the New Testament, it is clear that the *Baptism of Christ* draws upon the depiction of that scene in the Scrovegni Chapel, but with a new sense of temporal continuity: the episode is linked with the following scene of *St. John the Baptist Preaching*.

Giusto de' Menabuoi explores the problems posed by rendering space, volume, form and light. Continuing the work initiated by Giotto, he uses *perspectiva naturalis* in constructing his scenes, distributing - rather than bunching together - the solidly-modelled figures. The artist also demonstrates an interest in cartography, topography and, above all, mathematics and geometry. There is constant attention to the relation between the pictorial space and the actual architectural features of the interior. Look, for example, at the cornices: where the artist wishes to emphasize the space that opens up within a wall, he makes refined use of colour and perspective to achieve such an effect. The *trompe-l'oeil* effects clearly echo those achieved in the small choir balconies in the Scrovegni Chapel (component part 1); this can be seen, for example, in the spaces containing the *Evangelists*, who are depicted from below in foreshortening that highlights the depth of the space they are supposed to occupy.

The artist's handling of light is particularly interesting, with slight shadings of colour being used masterfully to render the passage from shadow to areas that are directly illuminated. The overall attention to such 'scientific' aspects of painting is rather unusual for the day and is probably due to the fact that Menabuoi maintained the contacts between artists and university figures

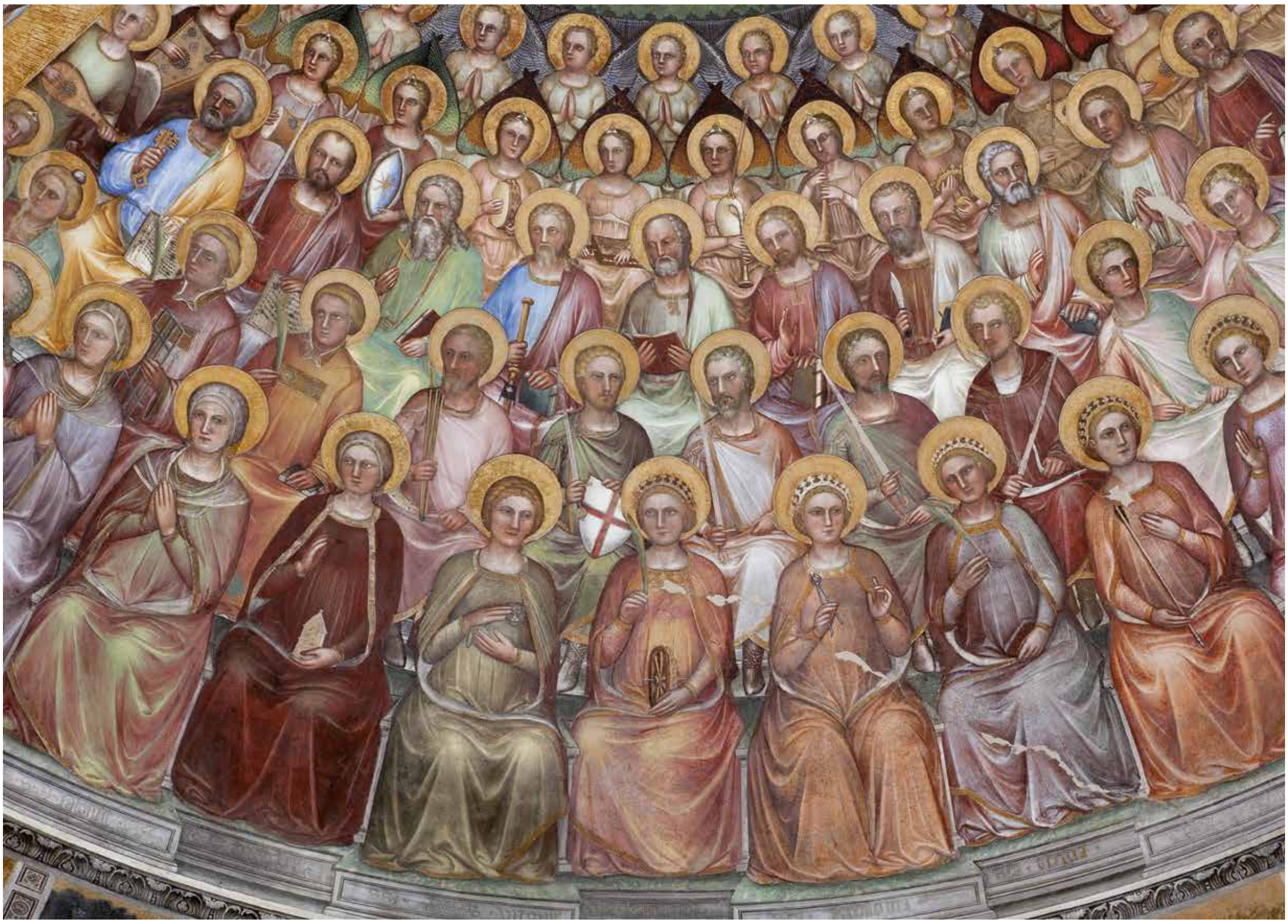
Ill. 39, Cathedral Baptistery, cupola



that had begun with Giotto and then also played a part in the work on the Cortellieri Chapel; his depiction of the human body is only one of the features which reveals Giusto de' Menabuoi's scientific interests, with the artist using essential, almost geometric, forms that serve to simplify his figures. Overall, the most striking feature of his work is its effective synthesis of form and colour. To see the quality of what his painting achieves here, one only needs look at the elegance with which he depicts the gowns and headgear of his female figures.

The cycle was commissioned by a woman - Fina Buzzaccarini, wife of Francesco 'Il Vecchio' da Carrara - who is also the most highly-ranking patron of any of the frescoes cycles covered by the nomination. This courtly female patronage is perhaps reflected in the careful rendition of feelings and expressive gestures in images which nevertheless maintain their celebratory tone. These scenes of sacred history are again given a contemporary setting, with Menabuoi even depicting figures belonging to the Carraresi court. One of these latter is the poet Francesco Petrarch, but particular attention is focused on the portraits of the women of that court: Sister Anna Buzzaccarini, Fina's sister, is depicted in *The Naming of John the Baptist*, whilst Fina and her three daughters are present at the scene of *The Birth of John the Baptist*. She and her husband also figure in *John the Baptist Commending Fina Buzzaccarini to the Mother of God*,

Ill. 40, Giusto de' Menabuoi, *Paradise*, Cathedral Baptistery (detail)



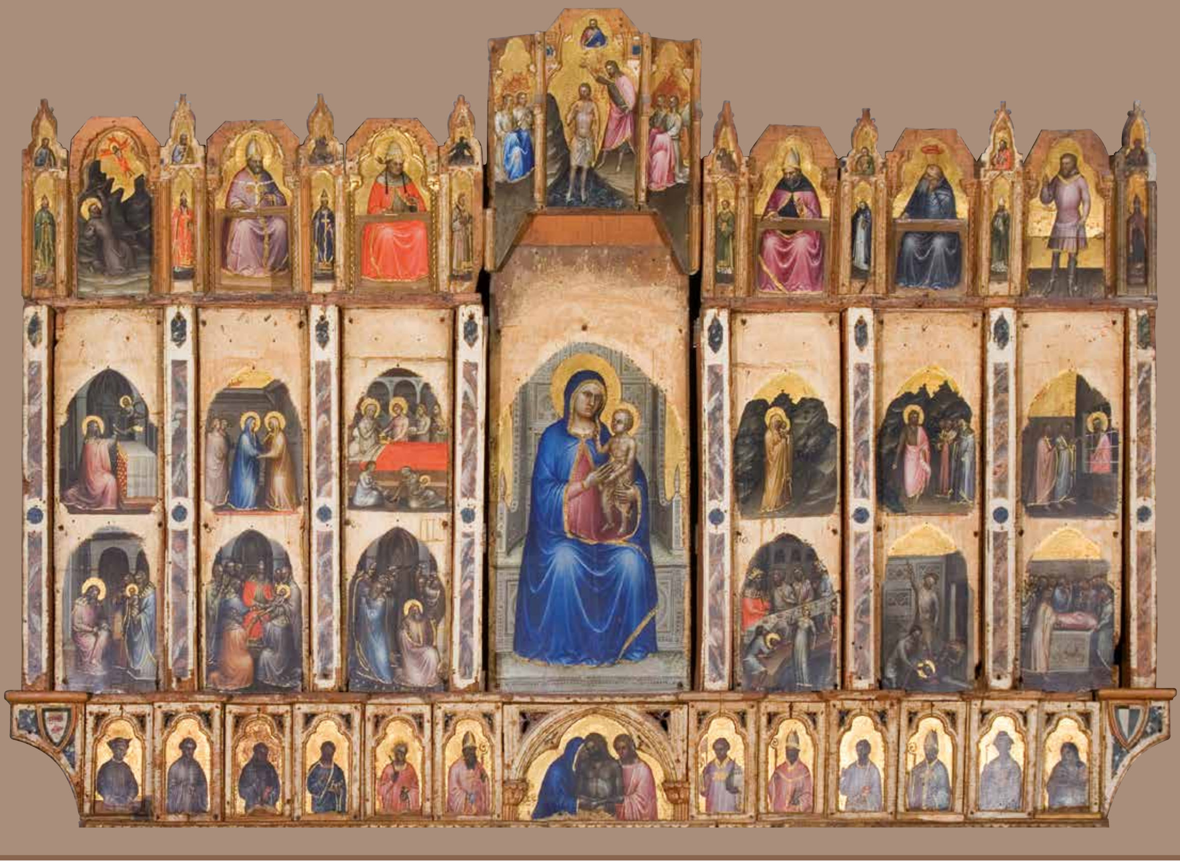
a scene painted within the Gothic arch that once surmounted the tomb of the aristocratic couple.

The entire iconographic programme of this cycle must have been drawn up for the artist by an expert theologian close to the patron. It comprises a *Paradise* (in the cupola), *Scenes from the Book of Genesis*, complete with seventeen biblical quotations in Latin (around the drum of the cupola); *Scenes from the Lives of John the Baptist, the Virgin and Christ* (around the walls) and *Scenes from the Apocalypse*, numbered from 1 to 43 (in the small presbytery).

Ill. 41, Giusto de' Menabuoi, *Madonna and Child Enthroned*, tempera on panel, Cathedral Baptistery

The Polyptych

In the presbytery Giusto de' Menabuoi also painted a small polyptych with the *Madonna and Child Enthroned*, *Scenes from the Lives of Jesus* and *St. John the Baptist, the Doctors of the Church and Saints with the crest of the Carraresi family*. Some of the scenes bear close resemblance to parts of the wall frescoes and these precise echoes make the polyptych an integral part of the pictorial decoration of the entire interior.



Plan of the Fresco Cycle in the Cathedral Baptistery

Legend

Cupola
Paradise
1 *Christ Pantocrator*
2 *Choirs of Angels*
3 *Ranks of male and female saints*
4 *Blessed Virgins*

The Drum of the Cupola
A Scenes from the Book of Genesis

The Pendentives
5 *St. Mark with Hosea and Jonah*
6 *St Matthew with Isaiah and Micah*
7 *St. Luke with David and Jeremiah*
8 *St. John with Ezekiel and Daniel*

Left wall, from the top downwards
9 *The Annunciation to St. Elizabeth*
10 *The Birth of John the Baptist*
11 *The Naming of John the Baptist*
12 *John the Baptist Preaching in the Wilderness*
13 *The Baptism of Christ*
14 *St. John the Baptist Imprisoned*
15 *Christ performs Miracles*
16 *Herod's Banquet*
17 *The Beheading of John the Baptist*
18 *Salome offers the tray bearing the Baptist's head to her mother, Herodias*
19 *The Resurrection of Lazarus*

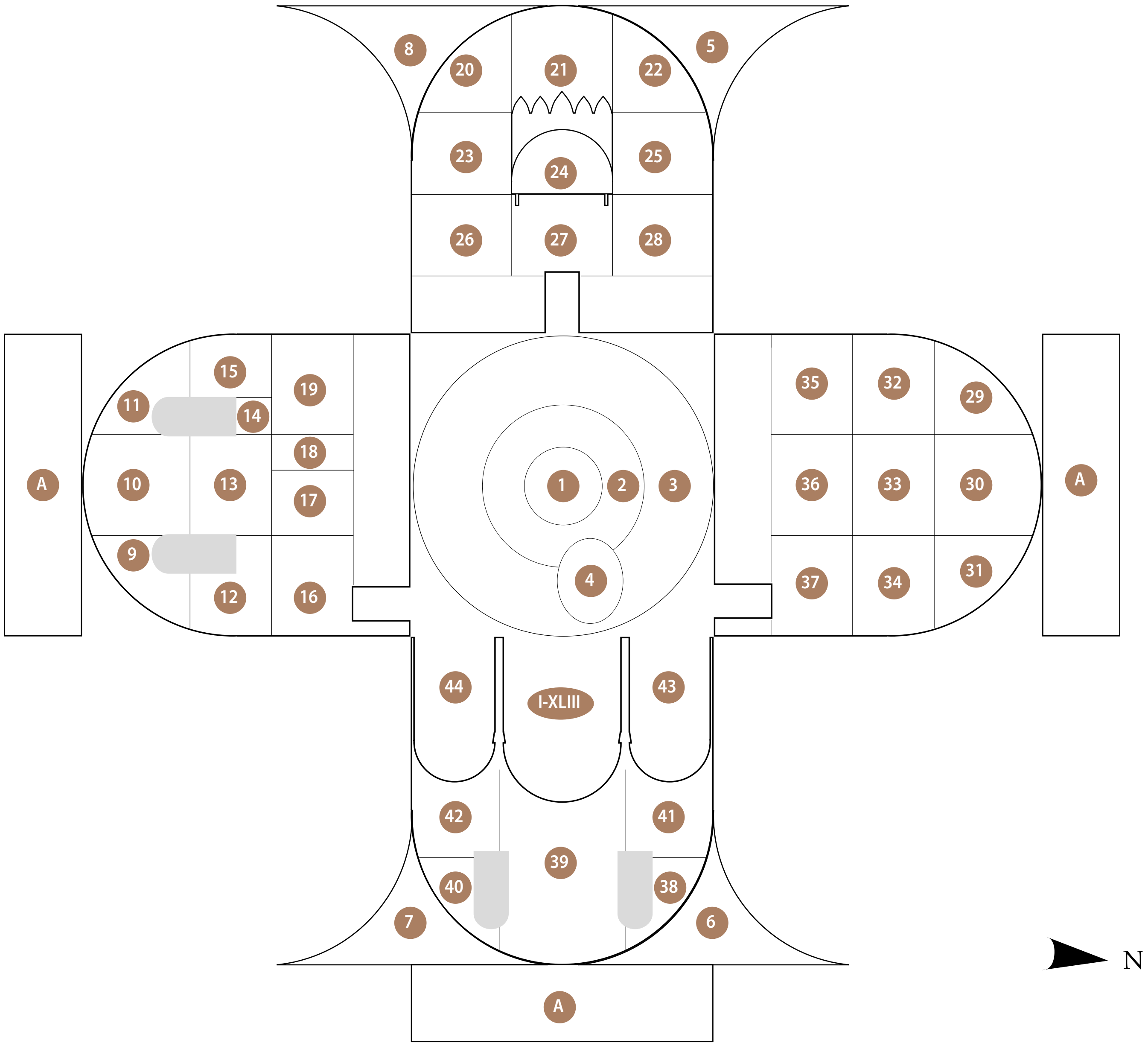
End wall, from the top downwards
20 *The Presentation of Mary in the Temple*
21 *The Annunciation*
22 *The Visitation*
23 *The Massacre of the innocents*
24 *St. John the Baptist commending Fina Buzzaccarini to the Virgin*
25 *Jesus amongst the Doctors in the temple*
26 *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem*
27 *St. John the Baptist with members of a city guild*
28 *The Last Supper*

Right wall, from the top downwards
29 *The Nativity*
30 *The Adoration of the Magi*
31 *The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple*
32 *The Calling of the Apostles Andrew and Simon Peter*
33 *The Calling of St. Matthew*
34 *The Marriage Feast of Cana*
35 *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane*
36 *The Kiss of Judas*
37 *Jesus Christ before Pilate*

Counterfacade, from the top downwards
38 *The Flight into Egypt*
39 *The Crucifixion*
40 *Christ's Harrowing of Hell*
41 *The Transfiguration*
42 *The empty Sepulchre*

Presbytery
43 *The Ascension*
44 *Pentecost*

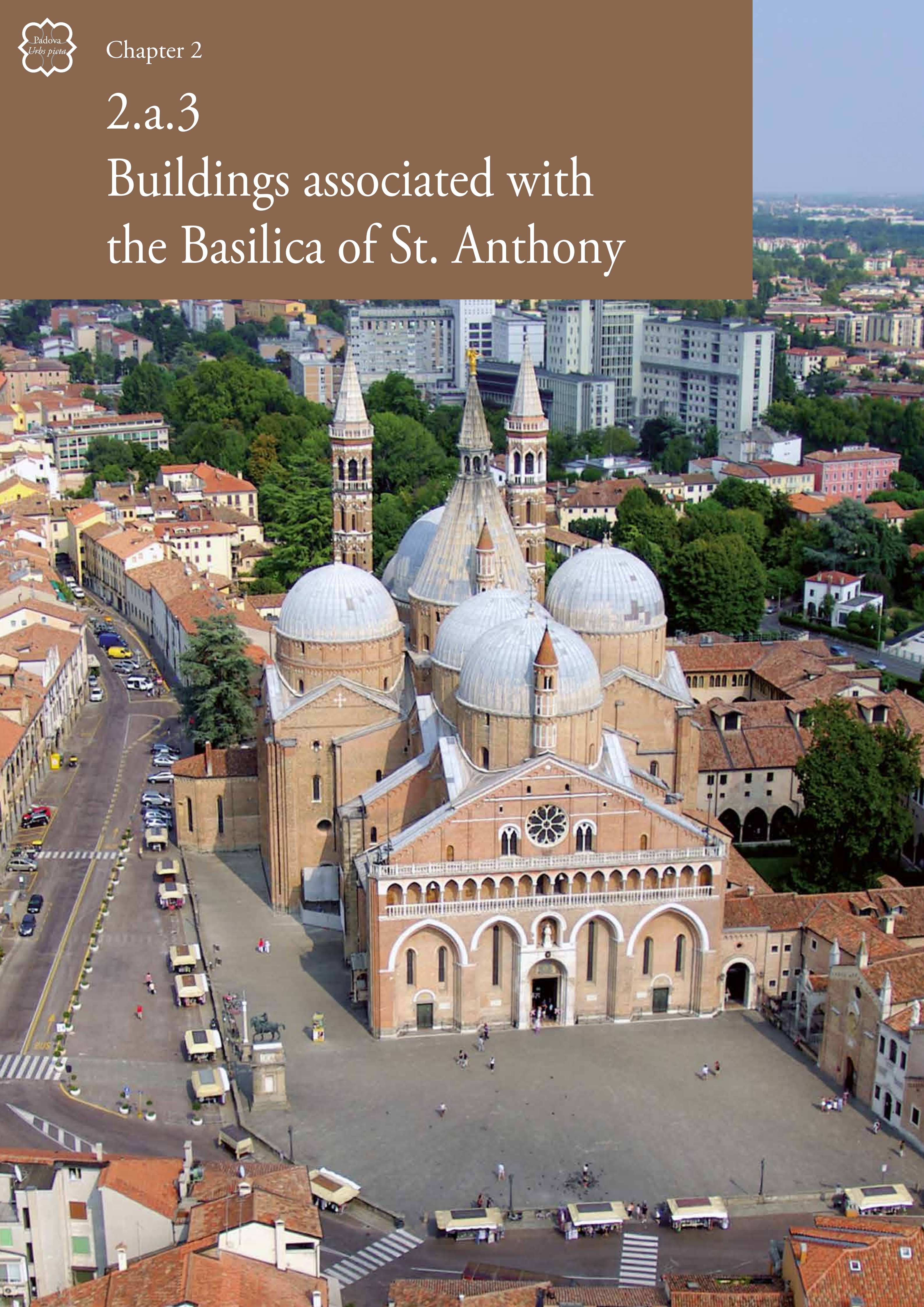
The Presbytery: Scenes from the Apocalypse
I *The Vision of St. John on the Island of Patmos*
II *God entrusting the angel with the Fate of the World*
III *The Lamb breaks the Seven Seals. The White Horse and Horseman*
IV *The Red Horse and the Horseman with the sword of war*
V *The Black Horse and the Horseman with the Scales*
VI *The Green Horse with Horseman*
VII *The souls of those who died for the Word*
VIII *The Earthquake of the World*
IX *The Four Angels hold back the Four Winds*
X *The Seven Angels Sound the Trumpet*
XI *The Second Angel sounds the Trumpet*
XII *The Third Angel sounds the Trumpet*
XIII *The Fourth Angel sounds the Trumpet*
XIV *The Fifth Angel sounds the Trumpet*
XV *The Sixth Angel sounds the Trumpet*
XVI *The apparition of the Four Angels*
XVII *The Seventh Angel sounds the Trumpet*
XVIII *The Dragon attempts to Seize the Child from the Mother*
XIX *The War of the Heavens*
XX *The sea monster with ten horns and seven heads*
XXI *The Triumph of the Lamb*
XXII *The Angel crying "Babylon has Fallen!"*
XXIII *The Angel Shouting*
XXIV *Christ amidst white clouds and a crescent moon*
XXV *The Angel emerges from the Temple*
XXVI *The Angel emerges from the Altar*
XXVII *One of the four living beings offers to the Seven Angels seven cups filled with the Wrath of God*
XXVIII *The Seven Angels robed in linen*
XXIX *The First Angel empties the Cup onto the ground*
XXX *The Second Angel empties the Cup into the Sea*
XXXI *The Third Angel empties the Cup into the rivers and springs*
XXXII *The Fourth Angel empties the Cup onto the Sun*
XXXIII *The fifth Angel empties the Cup onto the Throne of the beast*
XXXIV *The Sixth Angel empties the Cup into the river Euphrates*
XXXV *The Seventh Angel empties the cup into the air*
XXXVI *The Apparition of the Woman in the Desert*
XXXVII *The Angel descends from Heaven in a great light*
XXXVIII *The Angel raises a great stone*
XXXIX *Christ Victorious*
XL *The Angel standing upon the sun*
XLI *The Angel with Chains*
XLII *St. John sees the Holy City*
XLIII *"I, Jesus, have sent my Angel"*


A
A
I-XLIII
A
N

Chapter 2

2.a.3

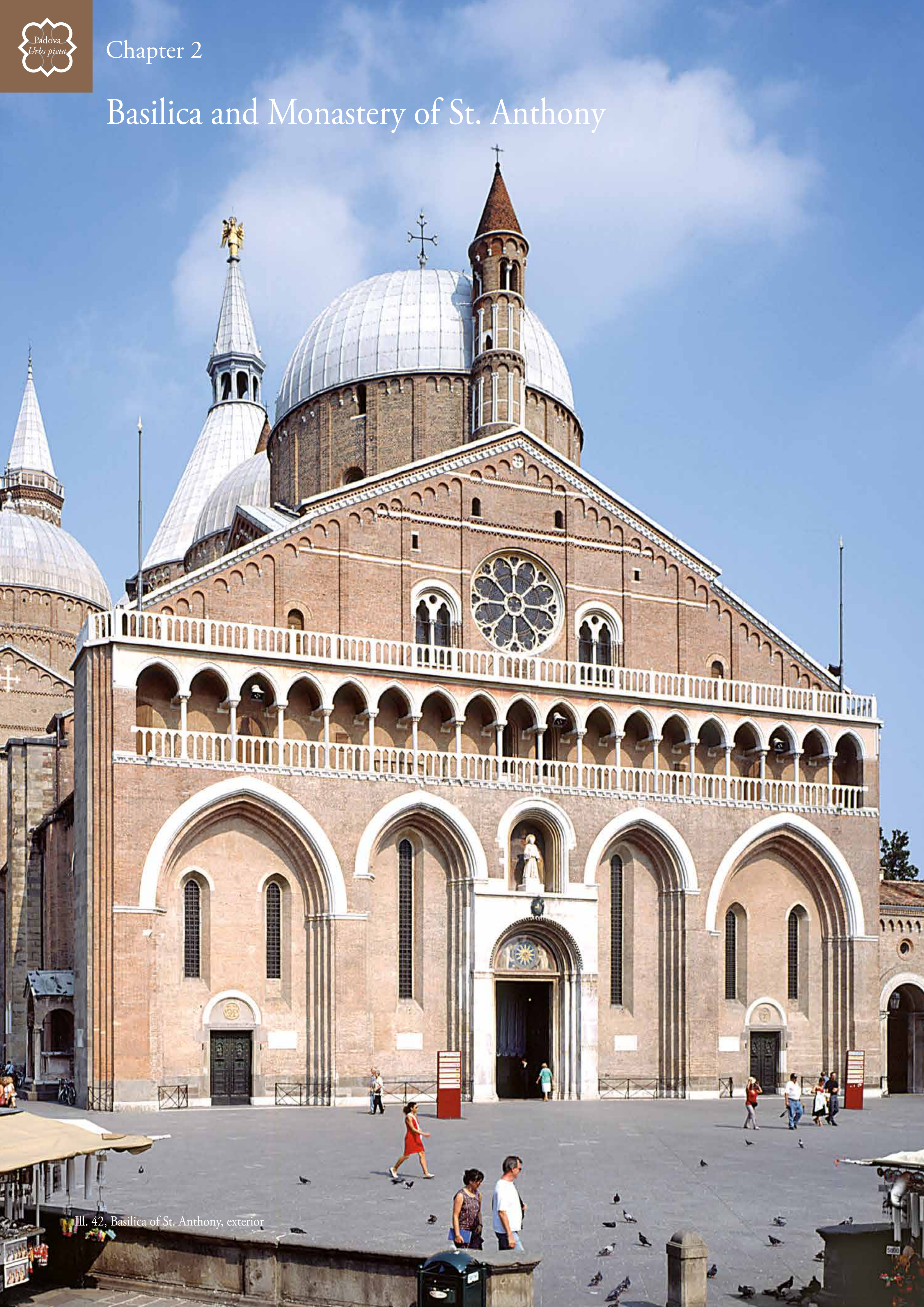
Buildings associated with the Basilica of St. Anthony



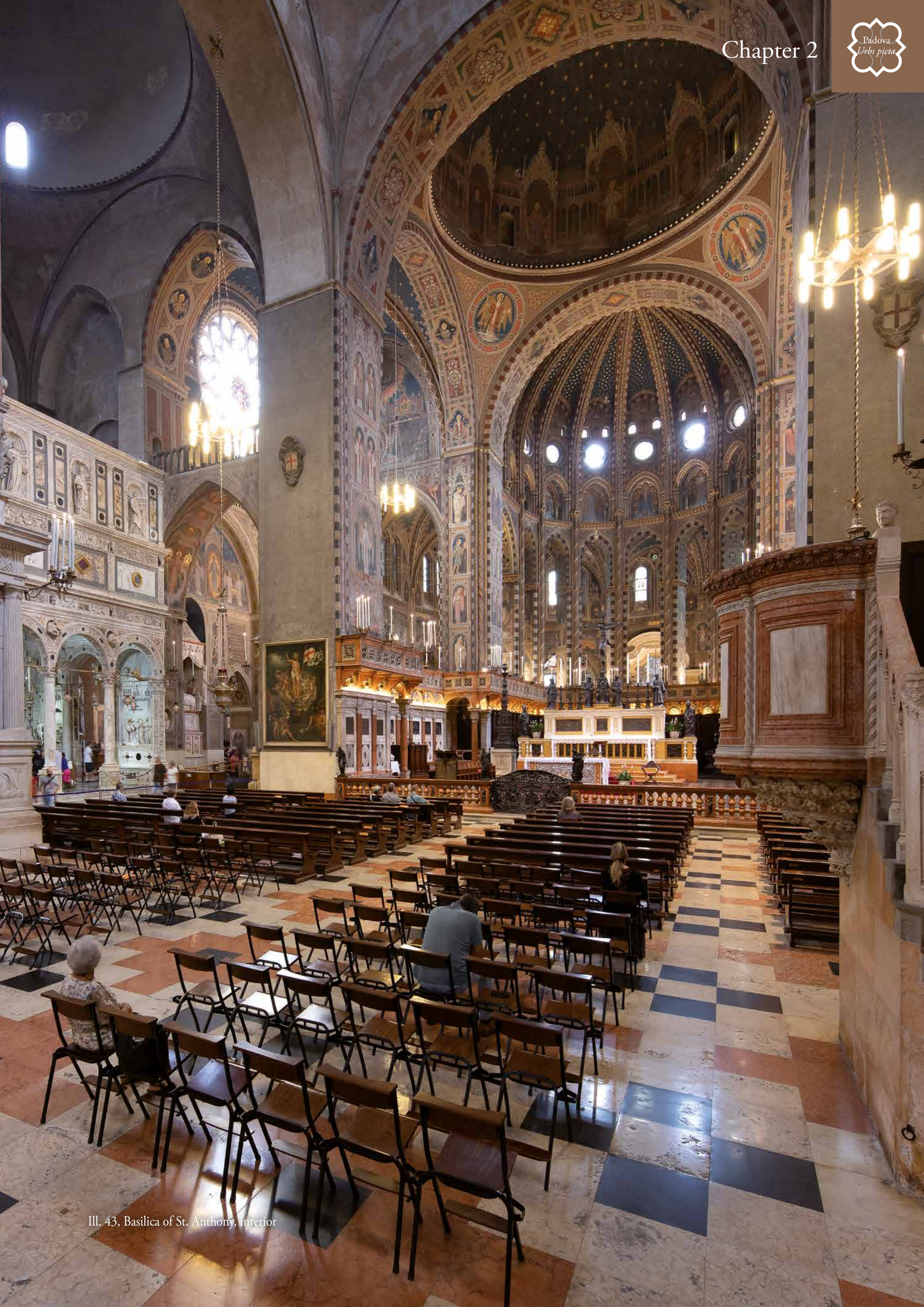
Chapter 2

Chapter 2

Basilica and Monastery of St. Anthony



Ill. 42, Basilica of St. Anthony, exterior



Ill. 43, Basilica of St. Anthony, interior

Basilica and Monastery of St. Anthony

Description of the Building

Most commonly known as *Il Santo*, the Basilica of St. Anthony of Padua is the most important religious centre in the city. The vast structure is characterised by a fusion of different styles: Romanesque, in features of its gabled façade; Gothic, in the floor plan of the ambulatory with its nine chapels; Byzantine, in the eight lead-sheeted cupolas and in the two slim bell-towers. There are also late nineteenth/early twentieth century features: the three bronze doors by the architect Camillo Boito.

Given the sheer scale of the complex made up of the Basilica and the Monastery, the description here outlines the most important features and then focuses on the architectural spaces that house fourteenth-century fresco cycles (presented in chronological order).

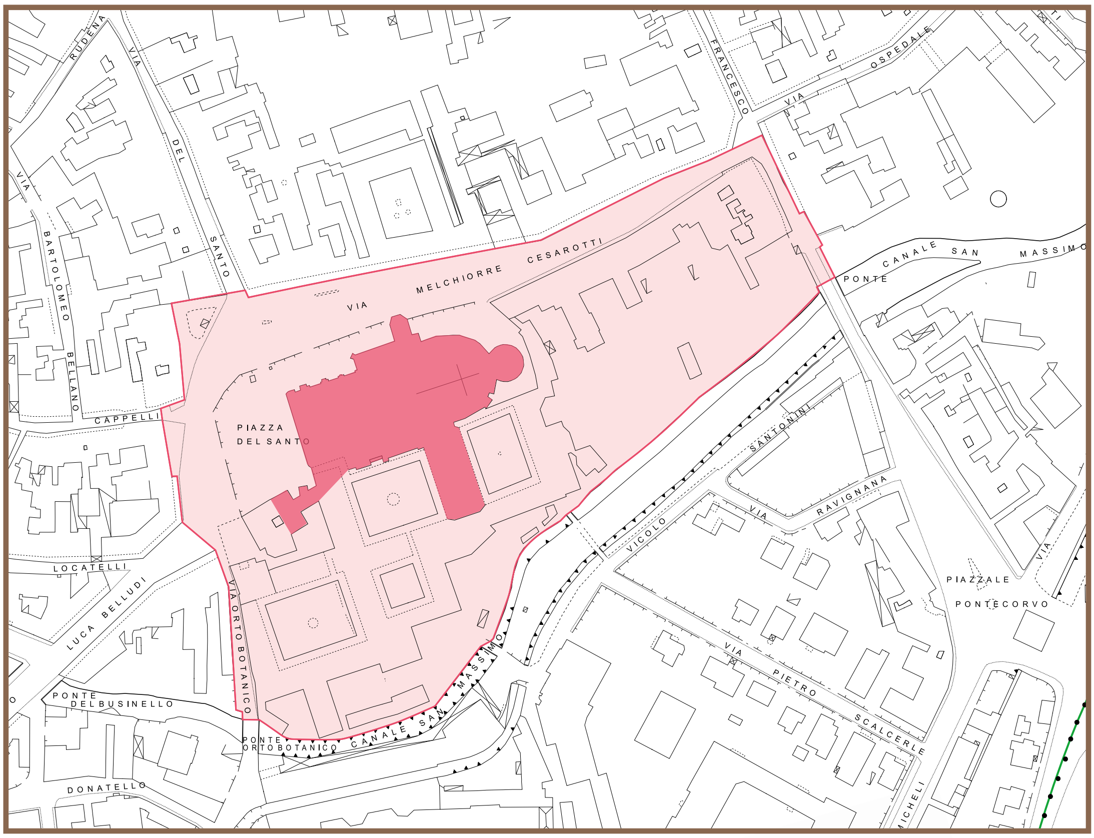
The Chapter Hall is located on the eastern side of the Monastery's oldest cloister - the Chapter Cloister - and is entered via an ample doorway flanked by two three-light openings, which together form a sort of monumental arcade; there is also a second point of entry from inside the Basilica, through the sacristy off the south aisle. The complex architecture of the Chapter Hall results from modifications made over the centuries. Almost certainly the space was originally linked, in both physical and functional terms, with the room directly to the south (now the vestibule giving access to the Novitiate Cloister).

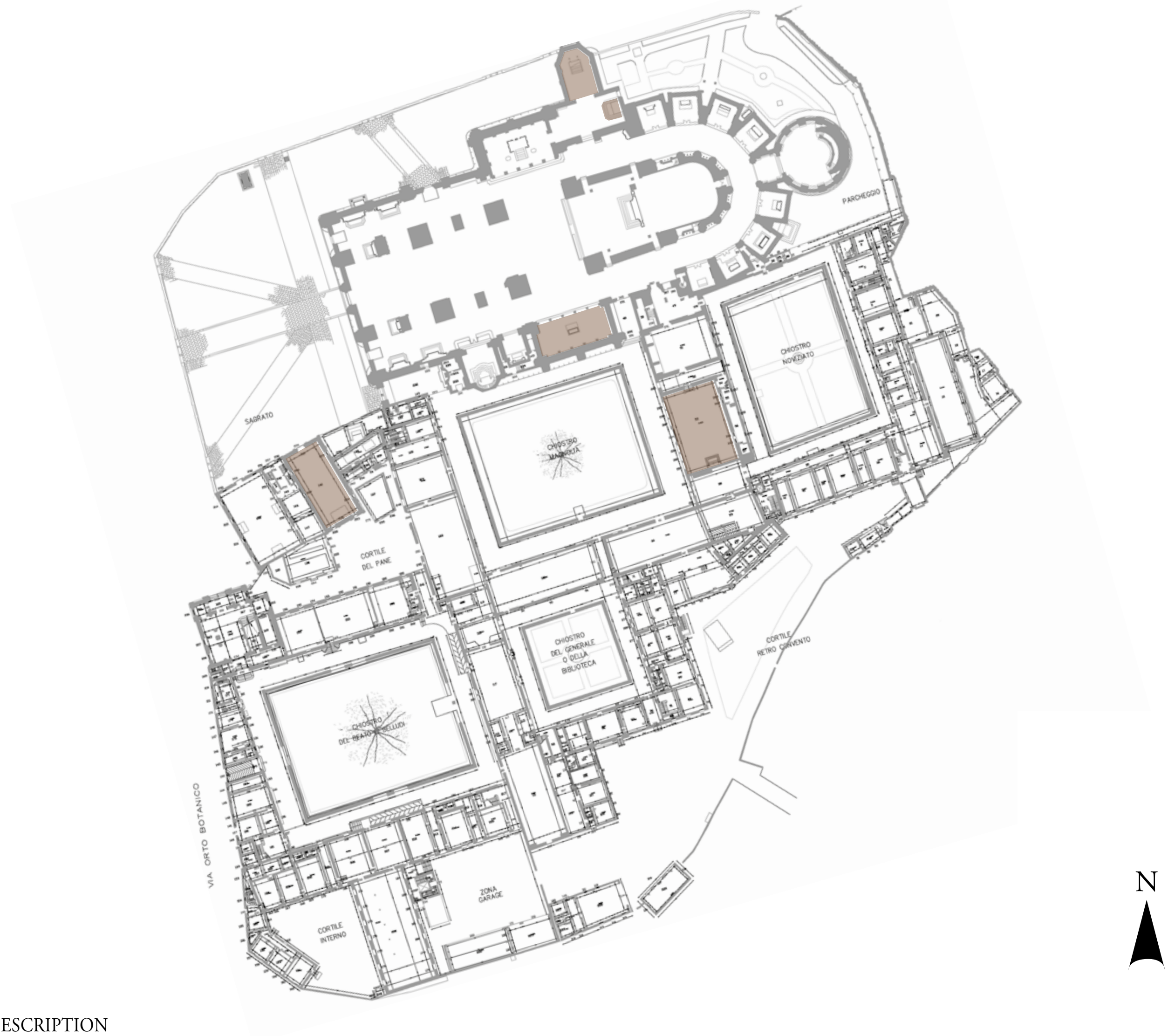
The interior shows clear evidence of the successive changes the space has undergone: the present fifteenth-century vaulted ceiling replaced an original that was probably flat; on the south wall there is now a sixteenth-century altar, and a doorway was at some point opened through the north wall.

The floor plan of the Basilica itself is a Latin cross, with a central nave and two side aisles which run into the ambulatory around the high altar, off which open nine chapels, all richly decorated over the centuries.

Along the sides of the nave are the funeral monuments of physicians, warriors, prelates and men-of-letters, both from Padua and elsewhere, who wished their lives and achievements to be commemorated within this holy basilica. The famous Venetian architect Michele Sanmicheli, for example, designed the tombs of Cardinal Pietro Bembo (second pillar on the right) and of the Venetian nobleman Alessandro Contarini.

As for the apse chapels off the ambulatory, one that merits special mention is the Benediction Chapel (or the Chapel of St. Catherine), first to the right of the Choir as one approaches from the south aisle of the church: the intrados of the archway here still has frescoes by Giotto, whilst the architecture and decoration of the interior of the chapel itself are the result of various subsequent interventions.


VIA RUDENA
VIA DEL SANTO
VIA BARTOLOMEO BELLANO
VIA FRANCESCO
VIA OSPEDALE
VIA MELCHIORRE CESAROTTI
PIAZZA DEL SANTO
CAPPELLI
LOCATELLI
LUCA BELLUDI
PONTE DEL BUSINELLO
VIA ORTO BOTANICO
PONTE ORTO BOTANICO
CANALE SAN MASSIMO
PONTE CANALE SAN MASSIMO
SANTONINI
VIA RAVIGNANA
VICOLO
VIA PIETRO SCALCERLE
PIAZZALE PONTECORVO
VIA
MICHELI
DONATELLO


PARCHEGGIO
CHIOSTRO NOVIZIATO
SAGRATO
CHIOSTRO DELLA MAGNOLIA
CORTILE DEL PANE
CHIOSTRO DEL GENERALE O DELLA BIBLIOTECA
CORTILE RETRO CONVENTO
CHIOSTRO DEL BEATO BELLUDI
VIA ORTO BOTANICO
ZONA GARAGE
CORTILE INTERNO
N

Proceeding round the ambulatory, one comes to the north transept, between the present day Cappella del Santo and the last chapel of the ambulatory itself: the Chapel of the Black Madonna. This includes the remains of a previous small church that was dedicated to Santa Maria Mater Domini. This latter was linked with a small monastery, perhaps donated to St. Anthony in 1229, which was the saint's original burial place, and the chapel preserves what are probably the earliest traces of Giotto's work in the Basilica.

The interior of the Chapel of the Black Madonna is richly decorated with frescoes and monumental tombs (along the walls), as well as an altar on the east wall; the tabernacle is richly adorned with pinnacle and spires, as well as with various figurative works of sculpture: *God the Father with his hand raised in Benediction* (the summit of the altar), a *Vir Dolorum* ('Man of Sorrows', within a clypeus at the centre of the pinnacle), *The Annunciation* (to the sides) and *Saints* (on the capitals below). The sides of the central space have frescoes of two Prophets, and at the centre now stands a statue of *The Madonna and Child.*

The first chapel opening off the south aisle houses the Gothic-style tomb of the Condottiere Gattamelata, who is also commemorated by Donatello's equestrian monument in front of the Basilica. Then come the Chapel of the Crucifixion (also Chapel of The Sacred Heart) and the Chapel of St. James (which since the sixteenth century has also been dedicated to St. Felix). This latter is an extraordinary example of Venetian Gothic and originally came about as a mausoleum for the Lupi di Soragna family; they would commission Andriolo de' Santi as architect and sculptor, whilst for the frescoes they appointed Altichiero da Zevio and Jacopo Avanzi, who would work in close collaboration. Andriolo created a long rectangular space that runs parallel to the nave itself, opening onto the aisle through five Gothic arches with gilded capitals and columns of red marble. The façade wall of this space is elegantly decorated with a fish-scale motif in red and white and houses five gothic tabernacles containing statues of saints Martin, Peter, James, Paul and John the Baptist. The interior has a three-bay ceiling of ribbed vaulting, whilst the end wall is divided by five columns supporting Gothic arches. Within these arches are the wall tombs of Bonifacio and Rossi Lupi di Soragna surmounted by frescoes lunettes.

To return to the description of the basilica itself, the central nave ends in the high altar, preceded by a balustrade in red marble that bears statues of *Faith, Hope, Charity* and *Temperance* by Tiziano Aspetti and twelve bronze bas-relief panels with *Episodes from the Old Testament* by Bartolomeo Bellano and Andrea Briosco. Set at the centre of a wide apse around which runs the ambulatory that leads to the Treasury Chapel (or Chapel of Holy Relics), the high altar itself is one of the most important features of the Basilica, not to say one of the greatest expressions of the Italian Renaissance. The original design for the altar

- recomposed by Camillo Boito - was by Donatello, who also created the gilded bronze statues that decorate it: a large *Crucifixion* above a *Madonna and Child Enthroned* which is flanked by the *Patron Saints of Padua* - Giustina, Anthony, Daniel and Prosdocimus - and *St. Louis* and *St. Francis.*

Donatello also created the stone sculpture of *The Deposition*, behind the high altar, whilst the monumental paschal candleholder with sacred and allegorical images (on the left) is by Andrea Briosco, who also produced two of the bronze bas-relief panels around the altar, which depict biblical scenes.

The largest of the chapels that open off the ambulatory is the Treasury Chapel, a baroque work by the Genoese architect Filippo Parodi, a pupil of Bernini. This houses the basilica's numerous holy relics, the most venerated of which are the uncorrupted tongue of St. Anthony, his chinbone and the stone he used as a pillow when he lived in Arcella (then outside Padua).

From the Chapel of the Black Madonna in the north aisle of the basilica, one has access to the Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi, a disciple of St. Anthony of Padua whose remains are in an urn on the wall. Previously, this chapel was dedicated to Saints Philip and James and was also known as the Conti Chapel, after the family of those who administered the estates of the Carraresi.

The structure itself is one that projects independently from the north side of the Basilica and the chapel has a square floor-plan surmounted by a ribbed vault, with a second three-sided space under a half-bowl vault. The bare brick exterior has a total of five splayed-jamb windows (two on the west wall and three in the east) and a small rose window. The roof has a tympanum with small blind arches that correspond to the line of the inside arcade around the apse; perhaps this feature is an extant trace of the previous chapel of St. Andrew.

Towards the altar end of the north aisle stands the Chapel of St. Anthony, which houses the green marble tomb of the Portuguese saint; the stucco work on the ceiling is the first of its kind in the Veneto and was produced by Giovanni Maria Falconetti. The most famous decorative feature here, however, comprises the nine alto-relief panels around the three walls of the chapel; the work of famous sixteenth-century sculptors, these depict the life and miracles of St. Anthony.

Finally, there are the fine cloisters in the monastery: the fifteenth-century Novitiate Cloister, which contains monuments by Giovanni Minello and Andrea Briosco; the Chapter (or Magnolia) Cloister, which has a wealth of marble monuments and occupies what was the site of the original monastery here; the Gothic Friar General's Cloister (once known as the Refectory Cloister), which leads off the Chapter Cloister and, among other monuments, houses the bas-relief tomb of Giacoma da Leonessa, wife of Erasmo da Narni (better known as 'Il Gattamelata'); and finally the Cloister that now houses the Museo Antoniano.

Description of the Fresco Cycles

The Basilica and Monastery of St. Anthony of Padua house the extant traces of Giotto's earliest works in Padua; these date from the period 1302-1303, before the fresco cycle in the Scrovegni Chapel.

If the work in the Scrovegni Chapel demonstrates Giotto's confident use of perspective in the rendition of three-dimensional pictorial space, the slightly-earlier decoration in the Monastery shows the Florentine laying the bases for that mastery. In effect, these works mark the chronological starting-point of the entire sequence of fresco cycles included in the nomination.

The Basilica, for its part, contains work by all the major fresco artists active in fourteenth-century Padua: Giotto, Giusto de' Menabuoi, Altichiero da Zevio, Jacopo Avanzi and Jacopo da Verona, and thus is a key part of the history of their commissions within the city.

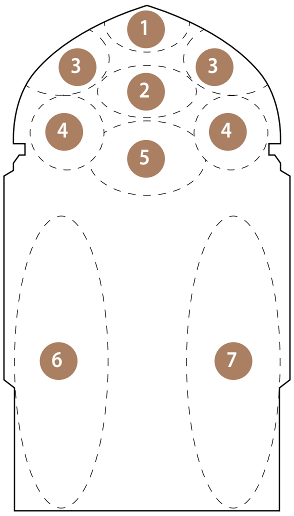
One work that has very recently been attributed to Giotto is probably his earliest in the Basilica and is to be found in the Chapel of the Black Madonna, the site of St. Anthony's original burial. (It would appear, therefore, that he probably worked on the Chapel of the Black Madonna before the frescoes in the Benediction Chapel and the Chapter Chapel.) Clearly designed in relation to the architectural space it occupies, that work in the Chapel of the Black Madonna is a fresco behind the statue of the Virgin and Child set within a niche of the altar. The faces of the prophets, the poses of the crown-bearing angels, and the foreshortening used in the depiction of the flying angels and of the figure of God the Father - all reveal Giotto's interest in perspective and in the portrayal of human emotions, factors that are so important in the Scrovegni Chapel (component part 1).

Moving on to the Chapter Hall in the monastery, we have a cycle of frescoes which, though now incomplete, is one of the most significant works produced in early-fourteenth-century Padua. Once, the walls here were entirely covered by frescoes inspired by a single narrative theme: *Scenes from the Life of St. Francis*. The artist's skill in the handling of pictorial space means that the scenes on two walls offer a unified perspective view; below, faux marble panels support arches comprising two orders of pilasters that are surmounted by an architrave apparently resting on projecting corbels (these latter probably intended as *trompe l'oeil* supports for the real wood ceiling). Despite repainting, the details here reveal the artist's inventive use of perspective and a refined taste for classical-style decorative details (plant volutes in faux relief, inspired by classical antiquity). Such features were entirely new to painting in early-fourteenth-century Padua and can only be compared with details of the decoration in the Scrovegni Chapel (component part 1).

Plan of the Frescoes in the Chapel of the Black Madonna in the Basilica of St. Anthony

Legend

1 *God the Father in Glory with Cherubim*
2 *Choirs of Angel*
3 *Angels bearing Cartouches*
4 *Angel Musicians with lute and psaltery*
5 *Crown-bearing Angels*
6 *Isaiah*
7 *David*



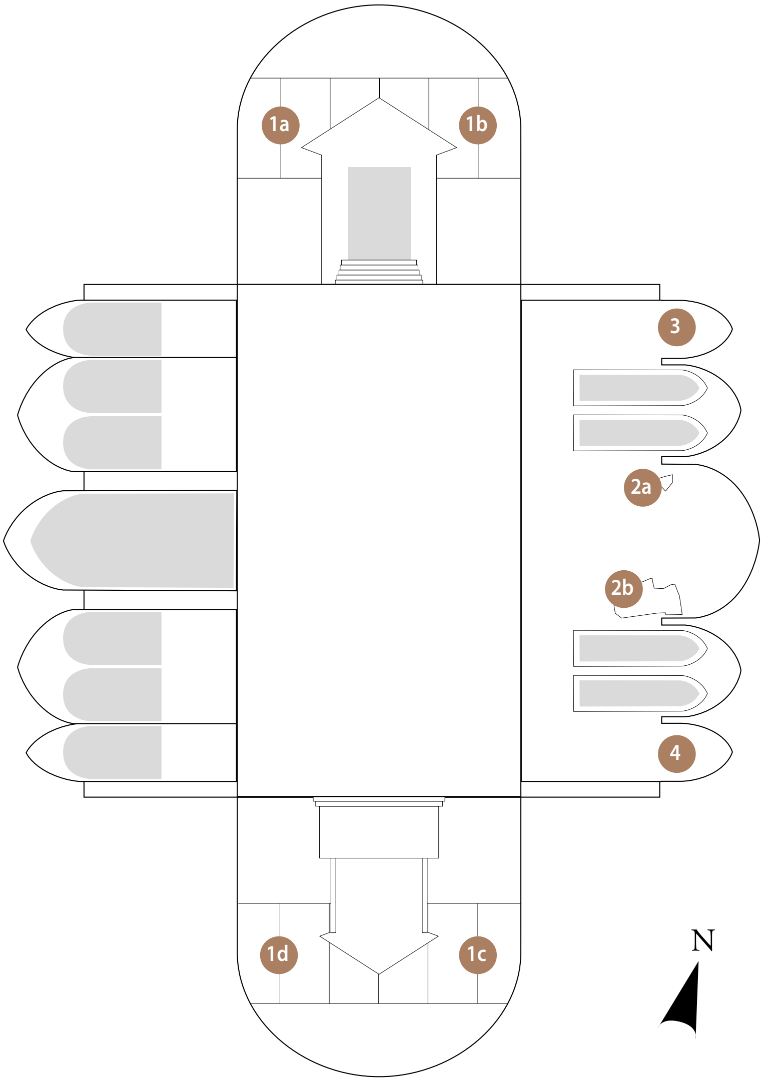
Ill. 44, Giotto, *God the Father in Glory and the Coronation of the Virgin, with angel musicians and the Prophets Isaiah and Daniel*, Chapel of the Black Madonna, Basilica of St. Anthony

Ecce vir
go con
cipiet
et pariet
filium
ysayas
De fruc
tu ven
tris tui
ponam
super
sedem
tuam.
David

Plan of the Fresco Cycle in the Chapter Hall in the Monastery of St. Anthony

Legend

1 *Loggia with canonized Franciscan, Prophets and Saints;*
  1a - *St. Clare, St. Francis*
  1b - *St. Anthony, the Prophet Isaiah*
  1c - *David, Daniel*
  1d - *St. John the Baptist and an Allegory of Death*
2 *The Crucifixion* **(2a, 2b)**
3 *St. Francis receives the Stigmata*
4 *Martyrdom of Franciscan Monks in Marrakesh*

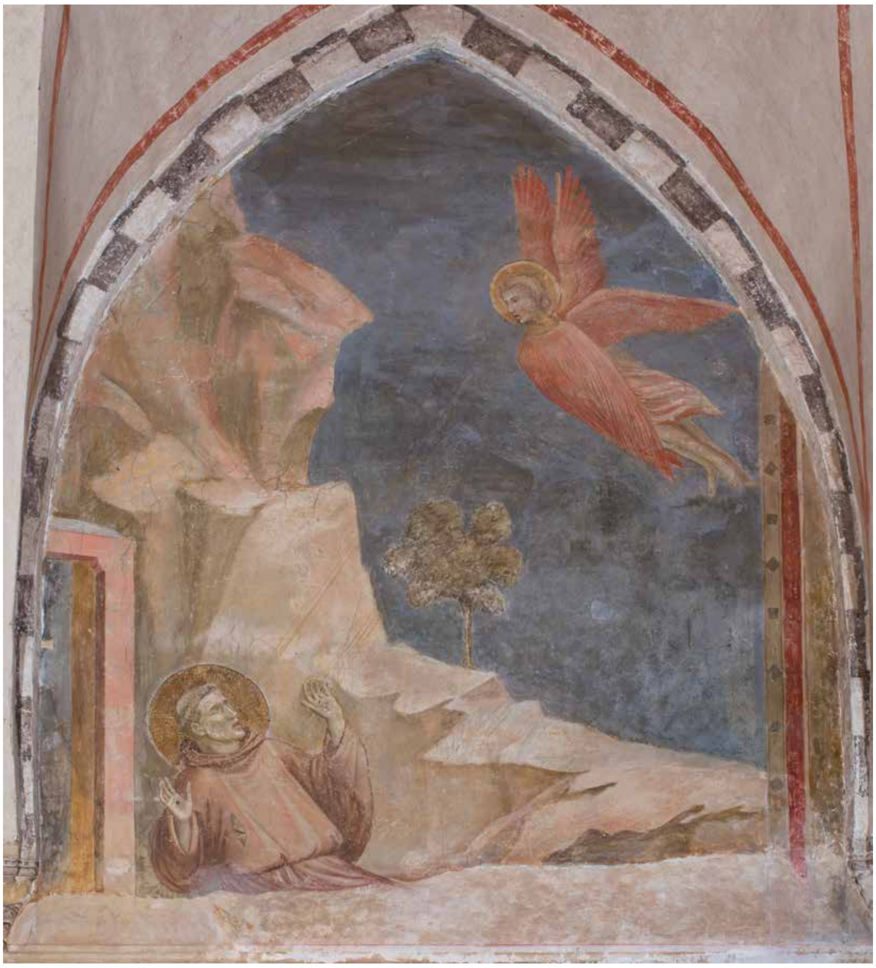


Ill. 45, Giotto, *St. Francis receiving the Stigmata*, Chapter Hall, Basilica of St. Anthony

Ill. 46, Chapter Hall, Basilica of St. Anthony

The extracts from sacred texts in the cartouches all refer to one theme: Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. Among the characters included is the remarkably realistic depiction of a decaying corpse, an allegory of Death, shown in silent dialogue with St. Anthony; the realism here heralds what Giotto would achieve in his later works. That sense of the real and the dramatic is also to be found in the other scenes, just as the command of perspective shown in the depiction of an architectural interior looks forward to what one sees in the Scrovegni Chapel (component part 1).

The innovative narrative suggests a close parallel between the founder of the order and St. Anthony, in



particular their radical interpretation of the *Imitatio Christi*, taken to the point of self-martyrdom. Giotto would in later works again use the same scheme of parallels between the two.

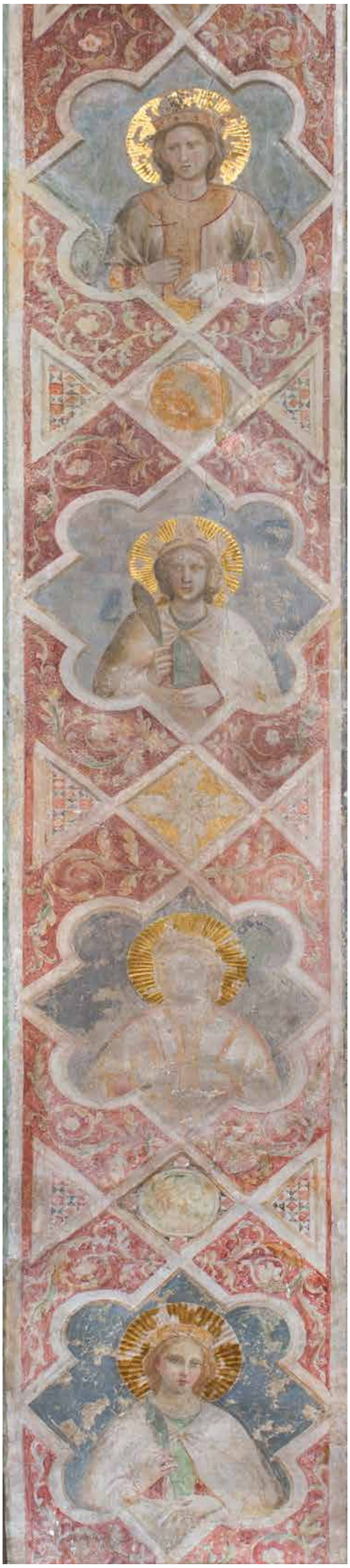
Alongside the Chapter Hall in the Monastery of St. Anthony is the passageway that links the Magnolia and Novitiate Cloisters. The walls here bear two other frescoes that may be attributed to Giotto and his workshop; they depict a *Lignum Vitae Christi* and a *Lignum Vitae Sancti Francisci*.

Within the basilica itself, the Benediction Chapel, the first to the south of the Choir, also contains traces of a precious fresco cycle attributed to Giotto. In the fourteenth century, the entire chapel must have been covered in frescoes; however, the work carried out in 1727 led to the repainting of a large part of the original surfaces.

Nowadays, the best preserved area is the intrados of the entrance archway, decorated with busts of female *Saints* depicted within geometrical borders: of the eight medallions, only the first on the left has been repainted. The frames enclosing the female figures are rendered in perspective and decorated with slim floral garlands. These saints cannot be identified with certainty, but each is a solidly modelled figure that stands out against a light blue background. The soft drapery, depicted without deep folds, heightens this effect of individual volume, which is also enhanced by the clear outline of the figures.

The type of frame used here is similar to that one finds in the decorative bands within the Scrovegni Chapel (component part 1), thus the work should be dated just after the completion of that project, around 1303-1305. The temporal proximity is also borne out by a comparison with the busts of the prophets to be found in the Scrovegni Chapel, which reveal the same handling of drapery and the same monumentality of form; there is also a facial similarity with various figures that appear in the Scrovegni *Scenes from the Life of Christ*.

When one comes to the Cappella di San Giacomo (St. James Chapel), off the south aisle, one finds work by other great fourteenth-century fresco artists active in both Padua and the Basilica: the extraordinary cycle of frescoes by Altichiero da Zevio and Jacopo Avanzi. Here, Altichiero da Zevio develops upon the innovations introduced by Giotto. Perspective is again used to render pictorial space three-dimensional, but the interiors created are even more complex and realistic; for the first time, painted and real architectural features interact as if forming a single whole. These developments are to be seen in close relation to the studies of optics and physics then being pursued at Padua University. It should also be pointed out that the coherence within the overall fresco cycle is such that, for a long time, the actual nature of the collaboration between the two artists was the subject of scholarly debate. Now, however, the contribution made by each has been clearly identified.



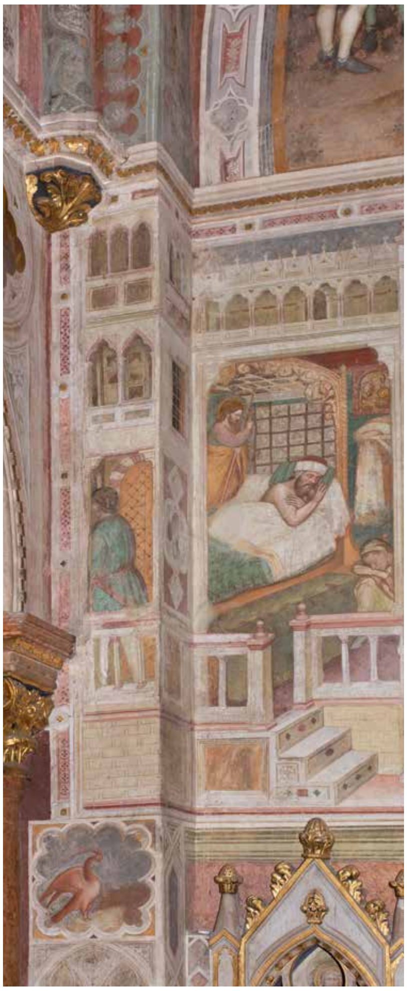
Ill.47, Giotto, *Female Saints*, Benediction Chapel, Basilica of St. Anthony (detail)

The works by Altichiero reflect his artistic maturity and reveal his ability in handling extremely dynamic scenes with numerous figures, as well as his skill in using the architecture of the chapel itself to create *trompe-l'oeil* spaces. A very significant example of this is the large scene of the *Crucifixion* in the lower level of the fresco, with the image divided by three actual columns that form three archways into the pictorial space: on the left one sees Jerusalem, in the centre the crucifixion scene itself and, on the right, a second walled citadel. This is the first time an artist used such daring *trompe l'oeil*, developing the pictorial space as an extension of the real architectural space.

The Arrival of St. James' body at the Castle of Queen Lupa in Spain is depicted as a sort of fable, with the saint's body arriving on a ship borne by an eagle to the castle of the queen who, legend had it, was an ancestor of the family, which commissioned this work. Once again, one sees the sacred narrative unfold within a contemporary setting, the episode serving as an opportunity to celebrate the regal origins of the Lupi family. This feature is also highly important in the depiction of Charlemagne's Council, which contains actual portraits of some of the most significant figures associated with the Carraresi court - Francesco Petrarch, Lombardo della Seta, Bonifacio Lupi and Francesco da Carrara - and a portrait of Charlemagne himself; this latter shows a clear resemblance to emperor Louis of Hungary, an ally of the Carraresi rulers of Padua. The entire image is, therefore, a clear political statement of the prestige of both the lords of Padua and of the Lupi family.

Jacopo Avanzi would also explore the narrative aspects of fresco; in creating scenes packed with figures whose expressions and gestures are individually characterised, he took even further that focus on individuals, which had begun with Giotto.

The narrative cycle starts in the upper lunettes and illustrates the life and Miracles of St. James. The choice of this saint as dedicatee is probably due to the fact that the work was commissioned by Bonifacio Lupi, who was a member of the Confraternity of St. James, a religious-military order founded in Spain in 1175. Furthermore, St. James was one of the patron saints of the Carraresi family.



Ill. 48, Altichiero da Zevio, *Charlemagne's Dream*, Chapel of St. James, Basilica of St. Anthony (detail)

Plan of the Fresco Cycle in the St. James Chapel in the Basilica of St. Anthony

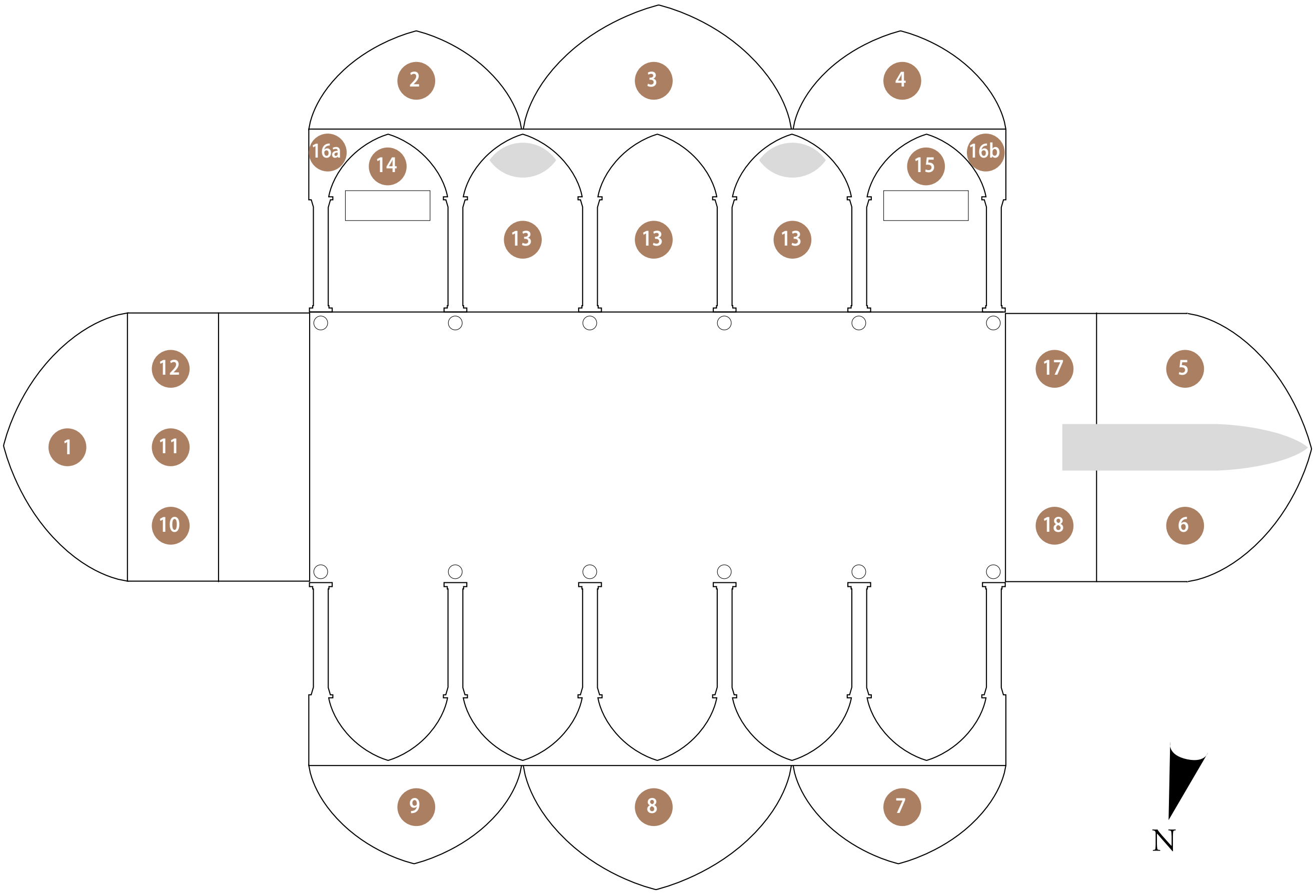
Legend

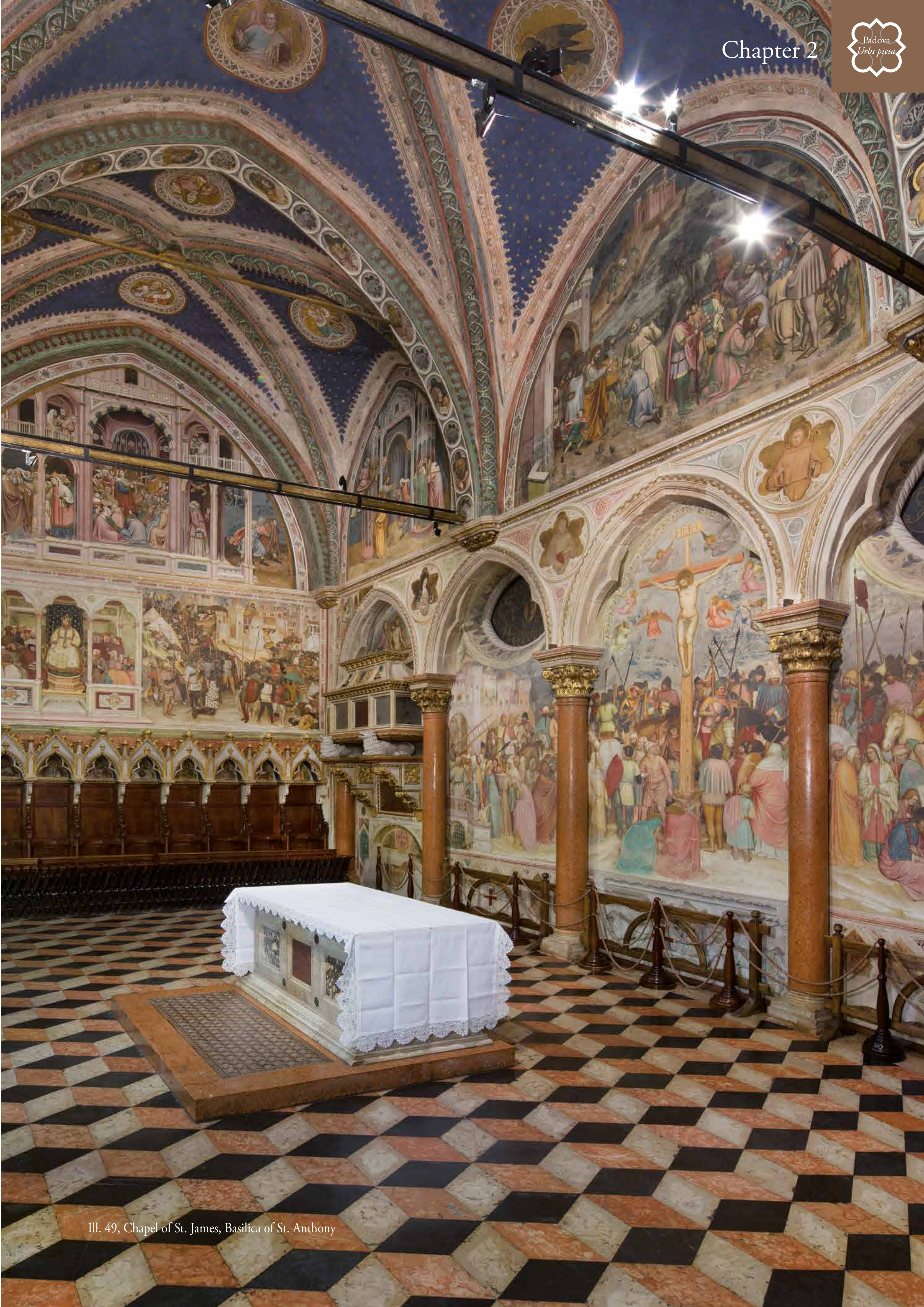
Upper Level

1 Jacopo Avanzi, *St. James Preaching*
2 Jacopo Avanzi, *The Baptism of the Magician Hermogenes*
3 Jacopo Avanzi, *The Beheading of St. James*
4 Jacopo Avanzi, *The Arrival of St. James' body at the Castle of Queen Lupa in Spain*
5 Altichiero da Zevio, *The Imprisonment of St. James' disciples*
6 Altichiero da Zevio, *St. James' disciples held in captivity*
7 Jacopo Avanzi, *An Angel frees the disciples; The disciples' pursuers fall off a precipice; The Arrival of a New Disciple*
8 Altichiero da Zevio, *The Miracle of the Untamed Bulls and the Arrival of the Saint's body at the Castle of Queen Lupa*
9 Altichiero da Zevio, *The Baptism of Queen Lupa*

Lower Level

10 Altichiero da Zevio, *Charlemagne's Dream*
11 Altichiero da Zevio, *The King's Council*
12 Altichiero da Zevio, *The Battle of Pamplona*
13 Altichiero da Zevio, *The Crucifixion*
14 Altichiero da Zevio, *Lament over the Dead Christ*
15 Altichiero da Zevio, *The Resurrection*
16 Altichiero da Zevio, *The Annunciation*
  16a *The Archangel Gabriel*
  16b *The Virgin Mary*
17 *Madonna Enthroned with the donors Bonifacio Lupi di Soragna, his wife Caterina and St. James and St. Catherine*
18 Painted Window





Ill. 49, Chapel of St. James, Basilica of St. Anthony

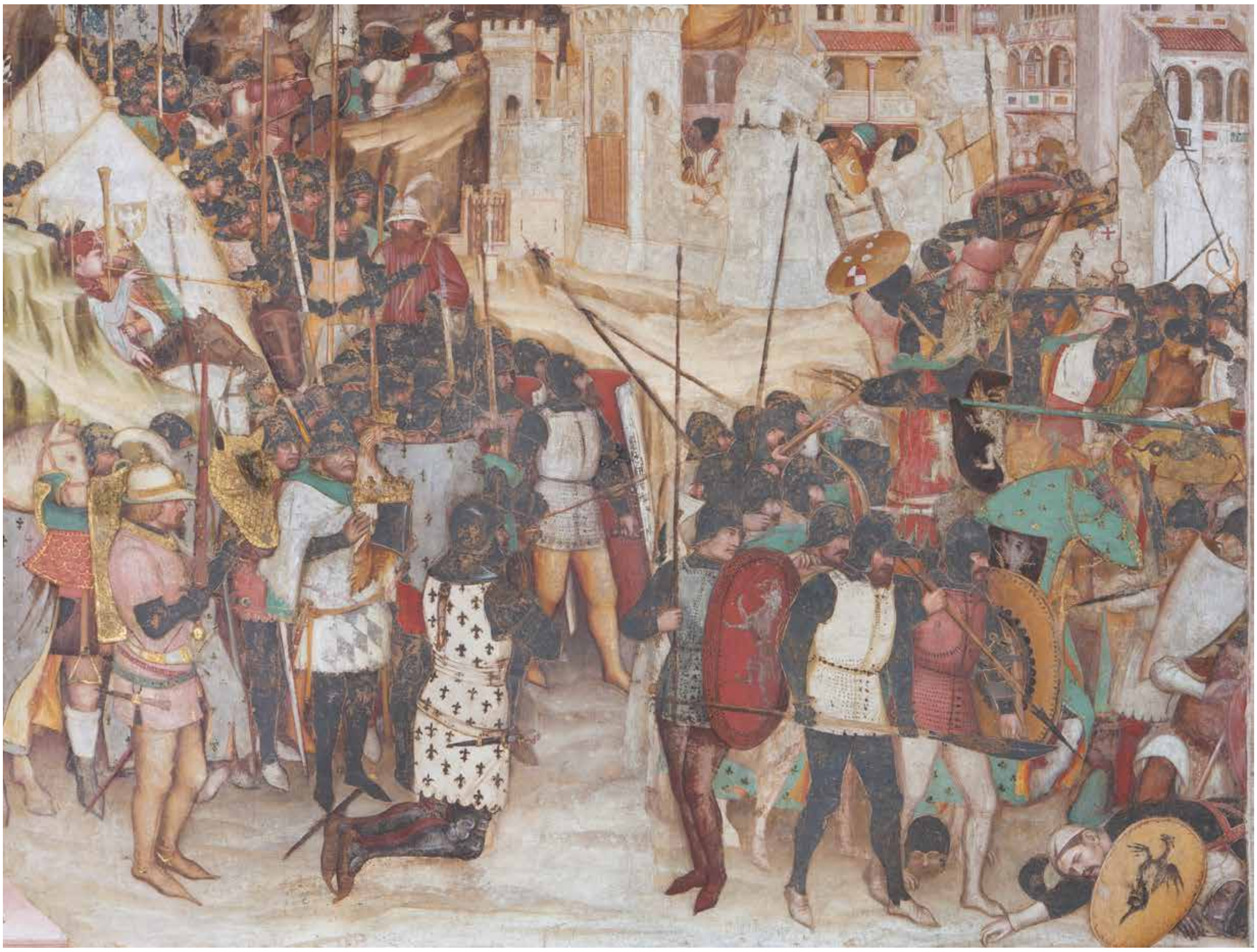
In the north aisle of the basilica, through the Chapel of the Black Madonna, one gains access to the Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi (otherwise the Chapel of Saints Philip and James or the Conti Chapel). Here the Conti family commissioned the fresco decoration from one of the greatest painters active in Padua, Giusto de' Menabuoi; just a few years earlier he had painted the frescoes in the Cathedral Baptistery (component part 2).

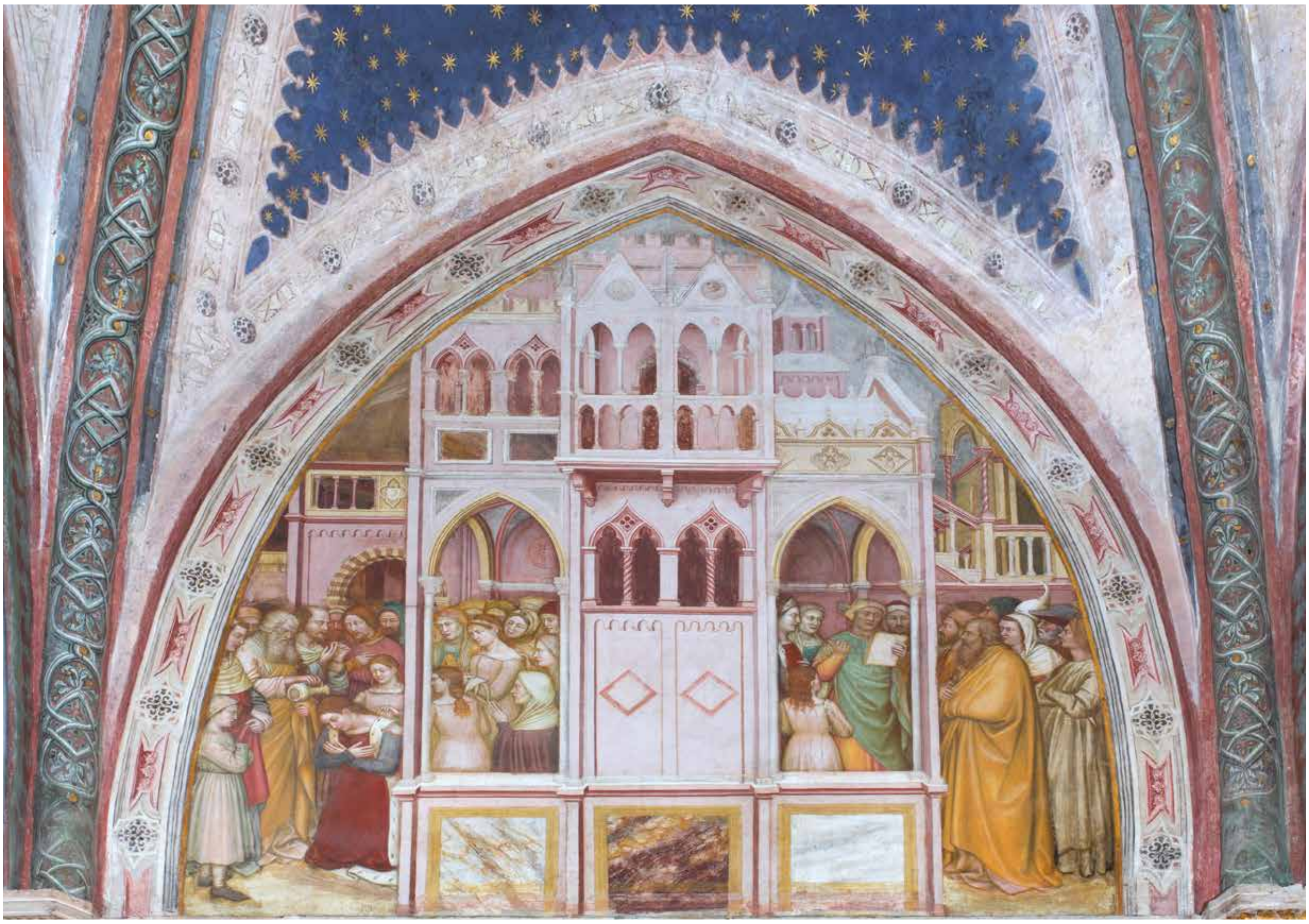
The interior is divided into two parts, the first, used by the faithful during worship, is decorated with *Scenes from the Life of St Philip and St. James the Minor*, whilst the apse has frescoes of *Christ Pantocrator* and *The Virgin Enthroned, with Franciscan Saints interceding on behalf of Donors*. Compared to his work in the Baptistery, here Giusto de' Menabuoi depicted fewer scenes, which occupy a greater area and thus provide the opportunity for more development in the handling of the spatial setting: a leading role in the overall composition is now played by the architectural details and by the landscapes that had previously been mere background features. The unified narrative draws on St. Matthew's Gospel, whilst the intrados of the arches are decorated with 40 figures taken from the *Genealogy of Christ*, thus forming a compendium of the entire Old Testament. These sequences of figures also provide the opportunity for portraits of Illustrious Paduans of the day (as in the Baptistery), along with depictions of contemporary crowd scenes.

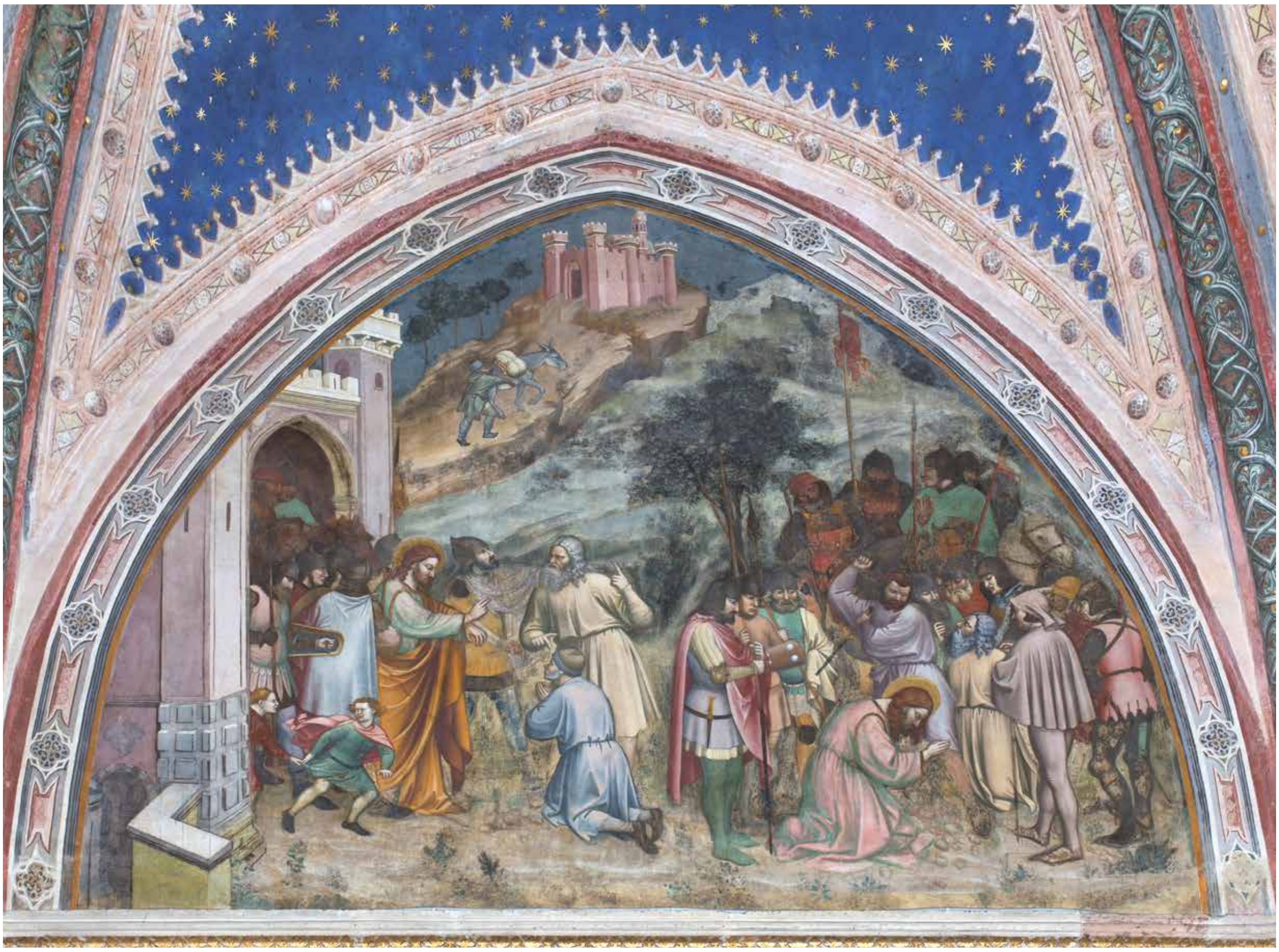
Ill. 50, Altichiero da Zevio, *The Battle of Pamplona*, Chapel of St. James, Basilica of St. Anthony (detail)

Ill. 51, Altichiero da Zevio, *The Baptism of Queen Lupa*, Chapel of St. James, Basilica of St. Anthony

Ill. 52, Jacopo Avanzi, *The Beheading of St. James*, Chapel of St. James, Basilica of St. Anthony







Plan of the Fresco Cycle in the Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi in the Basilica of St. Anthony

Legend

Vault and End Wall

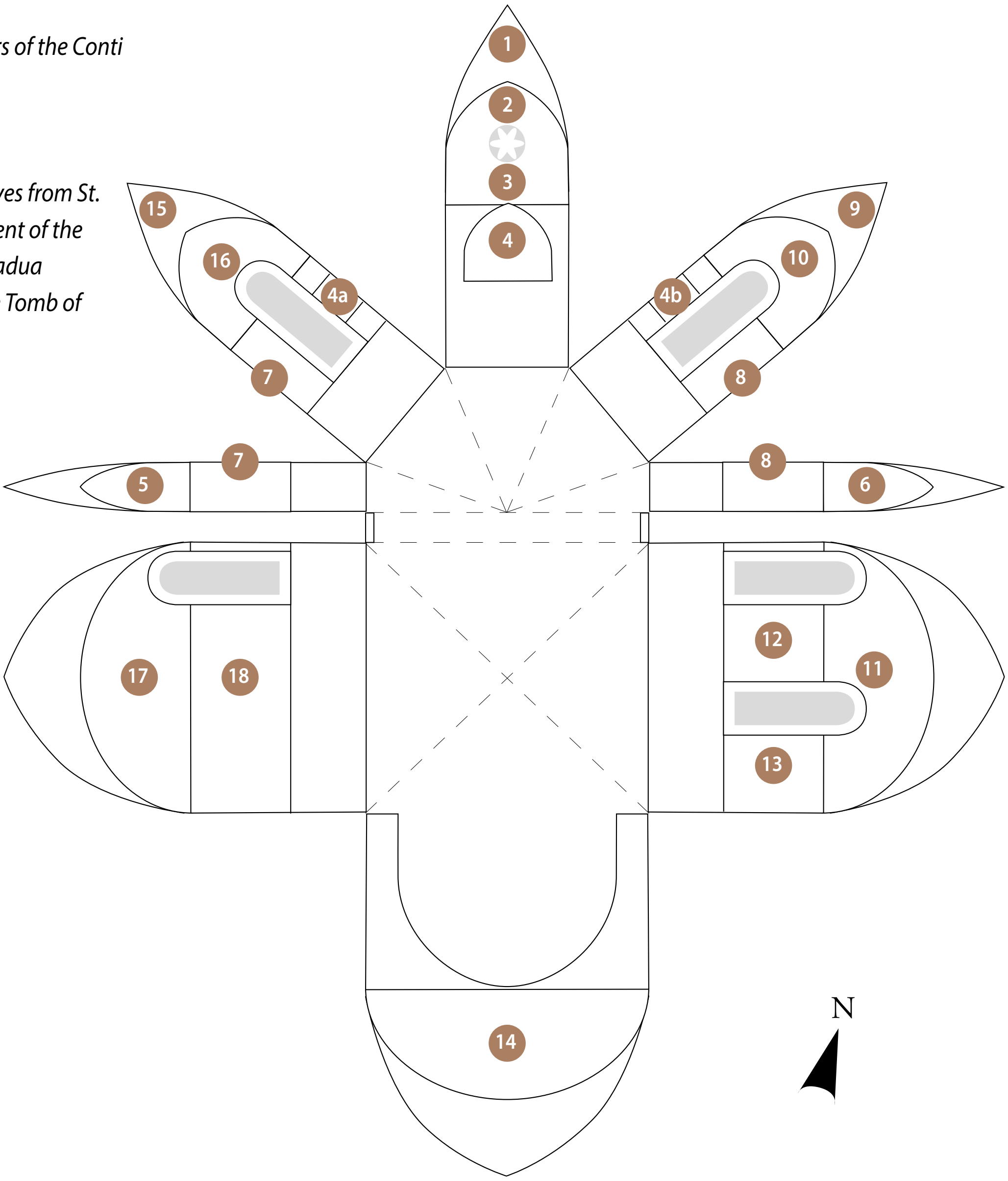
1 *Christ Pantocrator*
2 *The Holy Ghost*
3 *The Annunciation*
4 *Madonna and Child Enthroned with donors Naimerio and Manfredino Conti and St. Louis of Anjou, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Anthony and the Blessed Luca Belludi*
  4a *St. James and members of the Conti family*
  4b *St. Philip with members of the Conti family*
5 *St. Peter*
6 *St. Paul*
7 *Blessed Luca Belludi receives from St. Anthony the announcement of the Liberation of the City of Padua*
8 *Miraculous Healing at the Tomb of Blessed Luca Belludi*

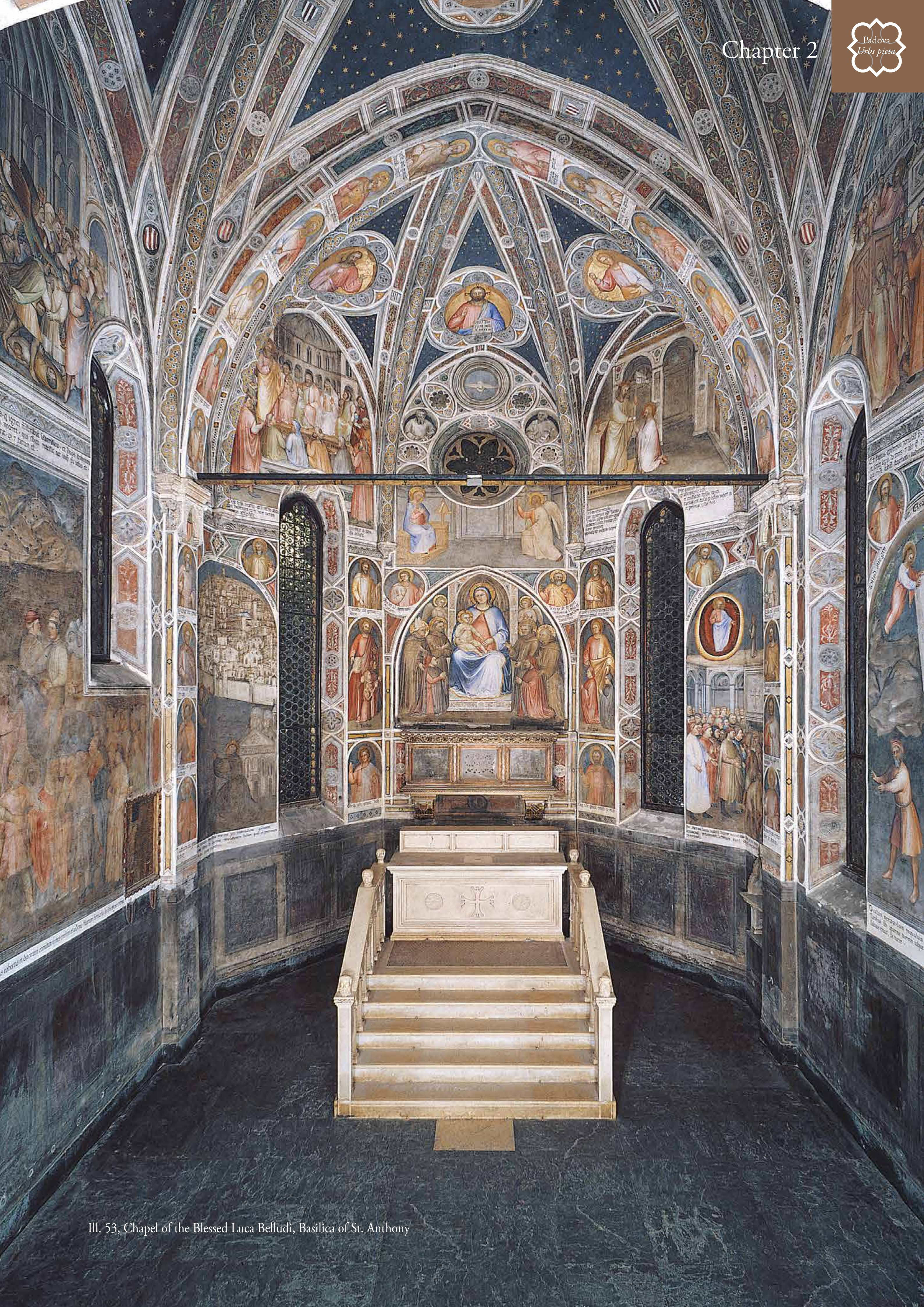
Right Side

9 *St. James the Minor*
10 *St. James receives Communion from the hands of Christ*
11 *St. James preaching in Jerusalem*
12 *The Miracle of the Tower*
13 *The Miracle of the Pilgrim*
14 *The Martyrdom of St. James*

Left Side

15 *St. Philip*
16 *St. Philip Arguing the Faith in Asia Minor*
17 *The Defeat of the Dragon*
18 *The Crucifixion of St. Philip*

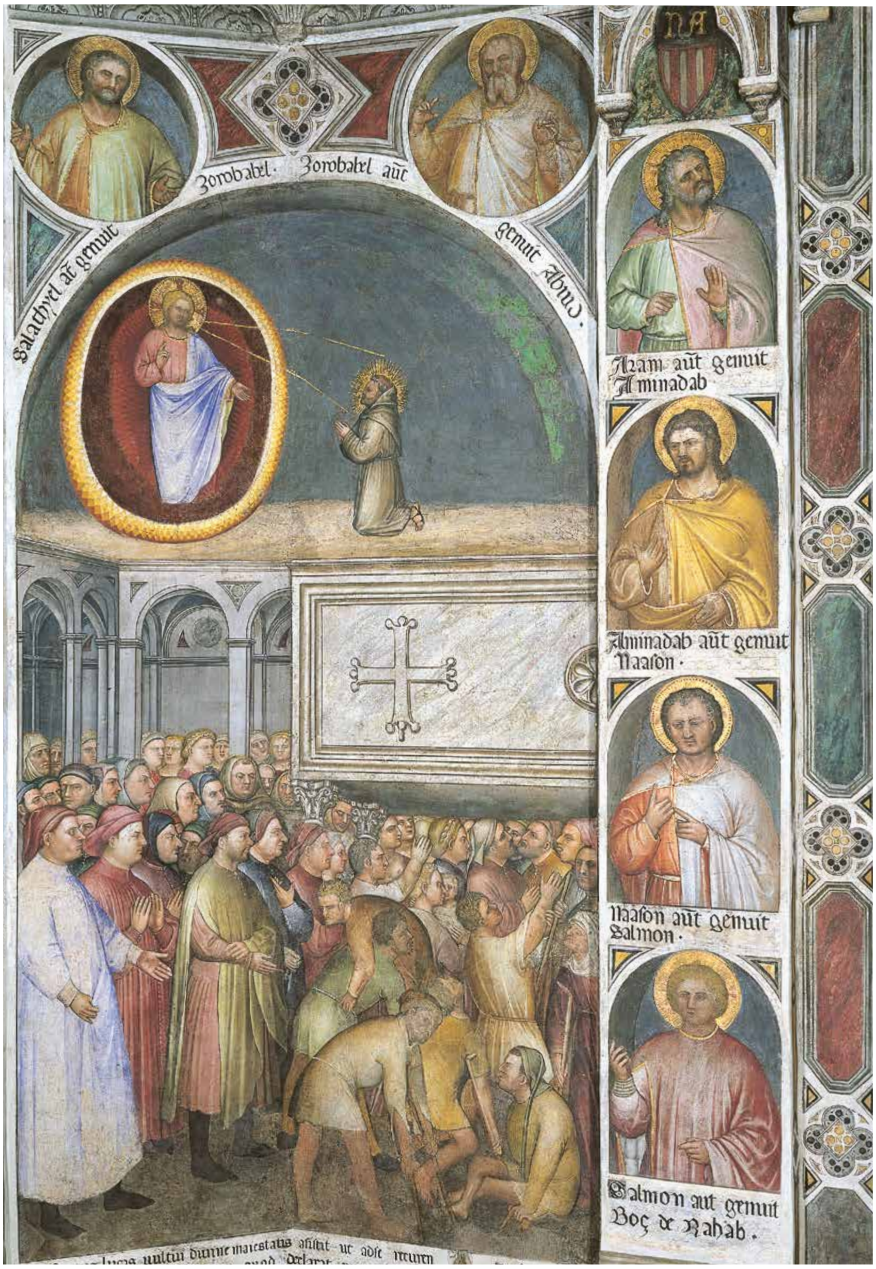




Ill. 53, Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi, Basilica of St. Anthony

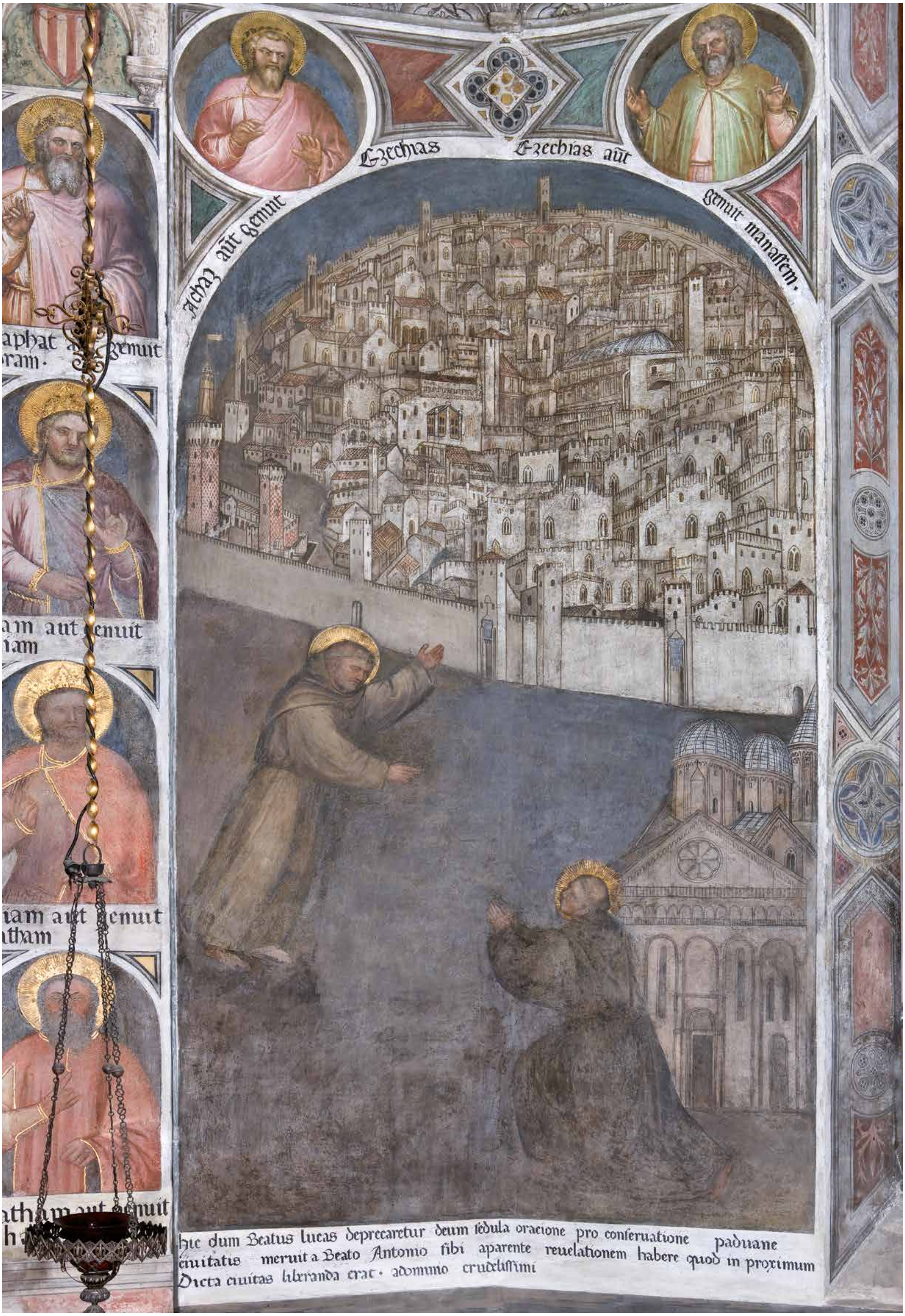
As elsewhere in these fresco cycles, one can see the artist choosing a contemporary setting for scenes from the Bible and from the Lives of the Saints, including a celebration of the donors as part of the celebration of human salvation.

In terms of both the history of the medium and its use in religious art, the cycles of fresco decoration within the Basilica are of fundamental importance. Indeed, the work here ranges over the period from the fourteenth century right up to the early twentieth (the apse Chapel of St. Stephen was decorated by the Roman artist Ludovico Seitz in 1909). Thus the entire complex forms a sort of handbook which is important not only for the history of art but also for the history of this specific technique.


Zorobabel.
Zorobabel aũt
Salathyel aũt genuit
genuit Abiud
Aram aũt genuit
Aminadab
Aminadab aũt genuit
Naason
Naason aut genuit
Salmon
Salmon aut genuit
Boz de Rahab

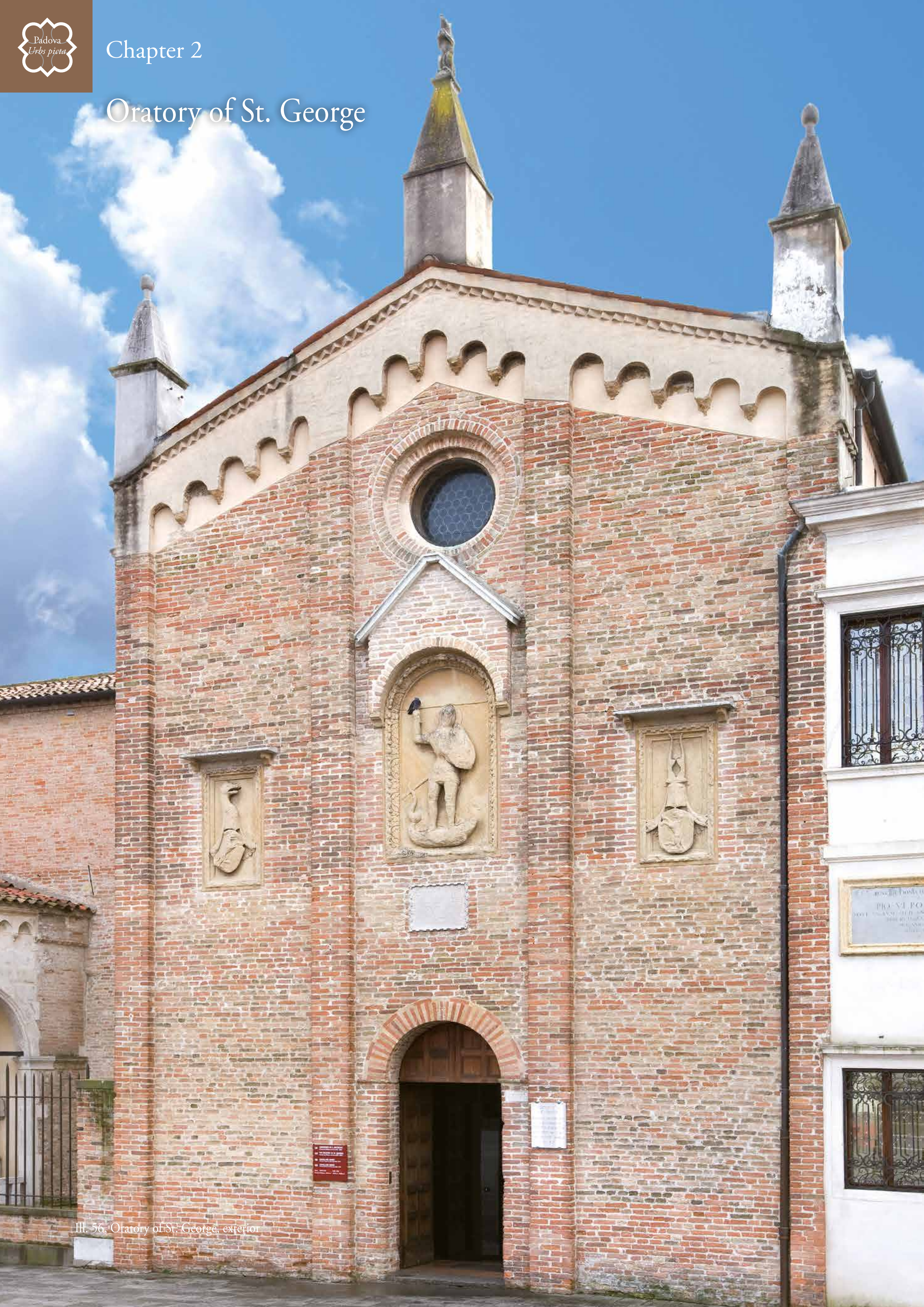
Ill. 54, Giusto de' Menabuoi, *Miraculous Healing at the Tomb of Blessed Luca Belludi*, Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi, Basilica of St. Anthony

Ill. 55, Giusto de' Menabuoi, *Blessed Luca Belludi receives from St. Anthony the announcement of the Liberation of the City of Padua*, Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi, Basilica of St. Anthony

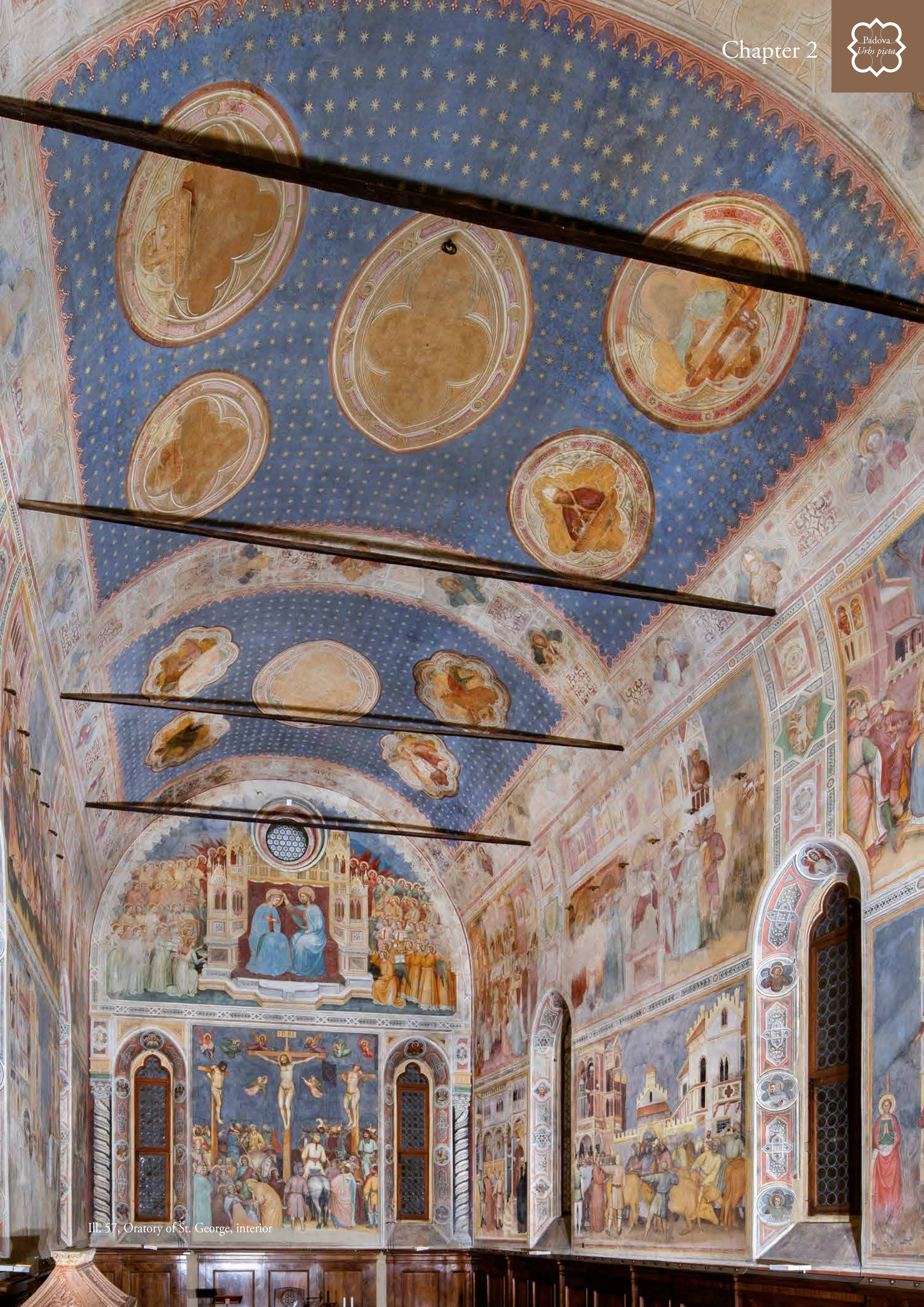

Achaz aūt genuit Ezechias
Ezechias aūt genuit manassem.
aphat aūt genuit
ram·
am aut genuit
am
iam aut genuit
atham
atham aut genuit
hic dum Beatus lucas deprecaretur deum sedula oracione pro conseruatione paduane ciuitatis meruit a Beato Antonio sibi aparente reuelationem habere quod in proximum Dicta ciuitas liberanda erat · adominio crudelissimi

Chapter 2

Oratory of St. George



Ill. 56, Oratory of St. George, exterior



Ill. 57, Oratory of St. George, interior

Oratory of St. George

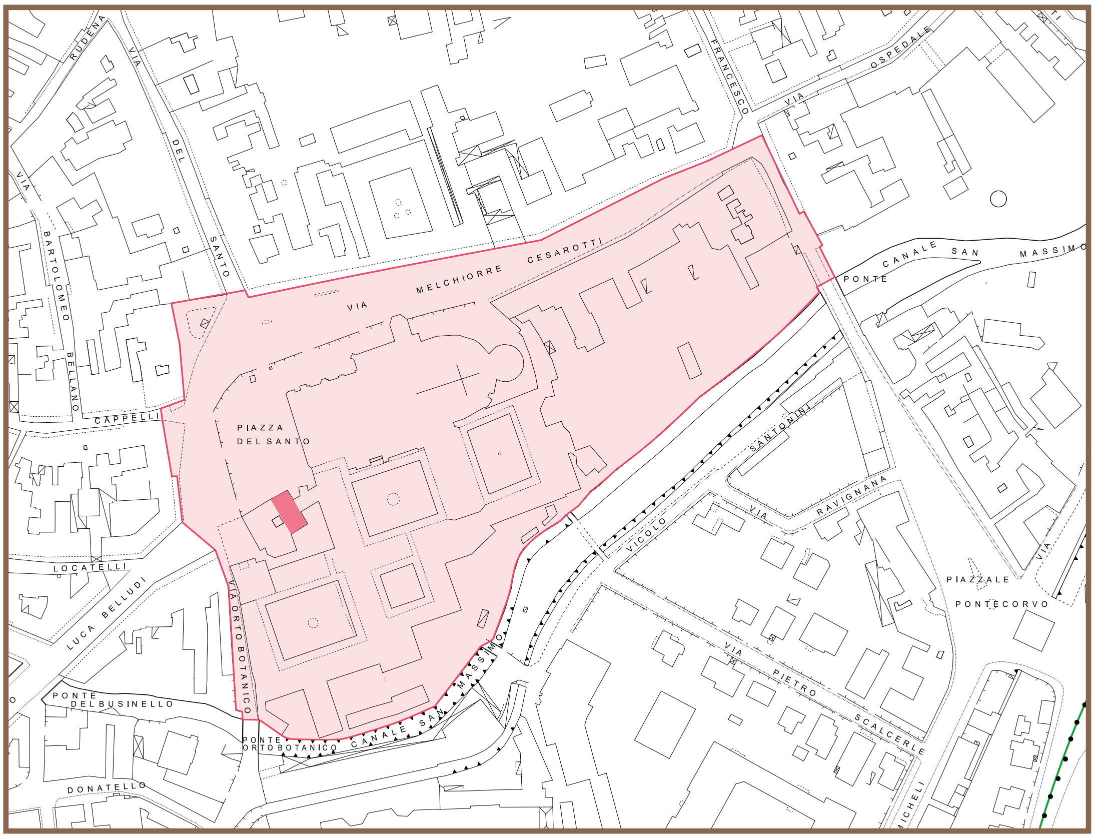
Description of the Building

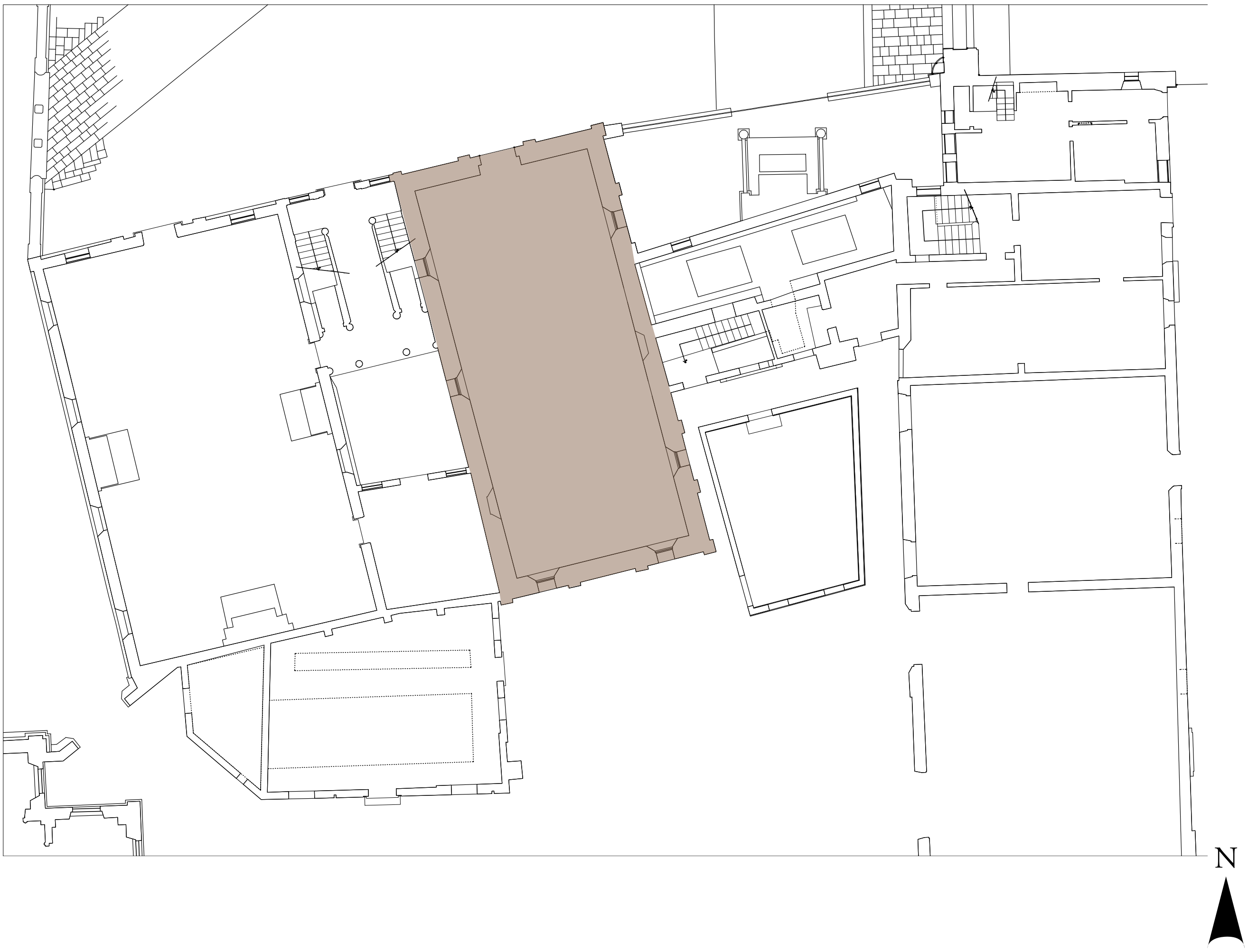
Giving onto the forecourt of the Basilica, the Oratory of St. George stands alongside the building known as the *Scoletta del Santo*, which now houses a cycle of paintings by Titian and others.

Though built some seventy years after the completion of the decoration of the Scrovegni Chapel, this structure keeps to the same architectural model and is decorated with narrative frescoes. In this case, the structure was intended as a family mausoleum and was commissioned by Raimondino Lupi da Soragna to house the mortal remains of the very same Bonifacio Lupi di Soragna who just a few years previously had commissioned Altichiero da Zevio to decorate the St. James Chapel within the Basilica.

The oratory has a very simple bare-brick exterior with a tripartite gabled facade and a splayed rose window. The whole has no particular decorative features, with the exception of three terracotta bas-reliefs depicting *St. George Killing the Dragon* and the crest of the Lupi da Soragna family (a wolf rampant). The interior is very similar to that of the Scrovegni Chapel, with a single barrel-vaulted space. However, the walls are entirely given over to a fresco cycle inspired by a particularly complex iconographical scheme.

Originally, the interior also housed the sarcophagus of duke Raimondino, mounted in the centre of the chapel on an architectural structure which was crowned with ten statues of armed figures. Very similar to the Scaligera family tombs one sees in Verona, this imposing feature reached almost to the ceiling; however, at the end of the sixteenth century, the structure was dismantled and all that remains now is the tomb, placed along the right wall, with various fragments of the statues.


VIA RUDENA
VIA DEL SANTO
VIA BARTOLOMEO BELLANO
CAPPELLI
FRANCESCO
VIA OSPEDALE
VIA MELCHIORRE CESAROTTI
PONTE
CANALE SAN MASSIMO
PIAZZA DEL SANTO
SANTONINI
VIA RAVIGNANA
VICOLO
PIAZZALE PONTECORVO
LOCATELLI
LUCA BELLUDI
VIA ORTO BOTANICO
PONTE DEL BUSINELLO
PONTE ORTO BOTANICO
CANALE SAN MASSIMO
VIA PIETRO SCALCERLE
DONATELLO
MICHELI
VIA


N

Description of the Fresco Cycle

Entirely covering with the walls of the Oratory, the frescoes here are by Altichiero da Zevio working in collaboration with Jacopo da Verona; the latter would also paint the fresco cycle in the Oratory of St. Michael (component part 4). The iconography is centred around scenes from *The Life of Christ* and from the *Lives* of the patron saints of the Lupi family (saints George, Catherine and Lucy). The narrative material is taken from Jacopo da Varagine's *Golden Legend*, and the decorative programme was probably drawn up by Lombardo da Seta, a learned Franciscan monk and secretary to Francesco Petrarch (who is depicted alongside the dukes of Soragna in the scene of *The Baptism of King Servius*).

While continuing to explore the *trompe-l'oeil* possibilities offered by the relation between actual and painted architectural space, the frescoes here show a new attention to luminous colour. Some scenes, such as *The Flight into Egypt,* take up and develop upon the models provided by Giotto in the Scrovegni Chapel (the two versions of this episode share such features as the wooden cabin, the rocky background and the fortress). However, overall there is a narrative movement leftwards from one scene to the other, which emphasizes the temporal sequence. The images in the cycle also highlight the martial and courtly virtues that the Lupi family embodied in their service to the Carraresi lords of Padua - the idea of valour being a key feature of the tomb that once stood in the middle of the Oratory. Within the frescoes themselves, members of the family are shown in full armour, kneeling before the Madonna and each identified by a painted inscription.

Set within broad cornices that link real and pictorial space, the scenes are organised on two levels, while the barrel vault is divided into three bays by painted decorative bands.

Plan of the Fresco Cycle in the Oratory of St. George

Legend

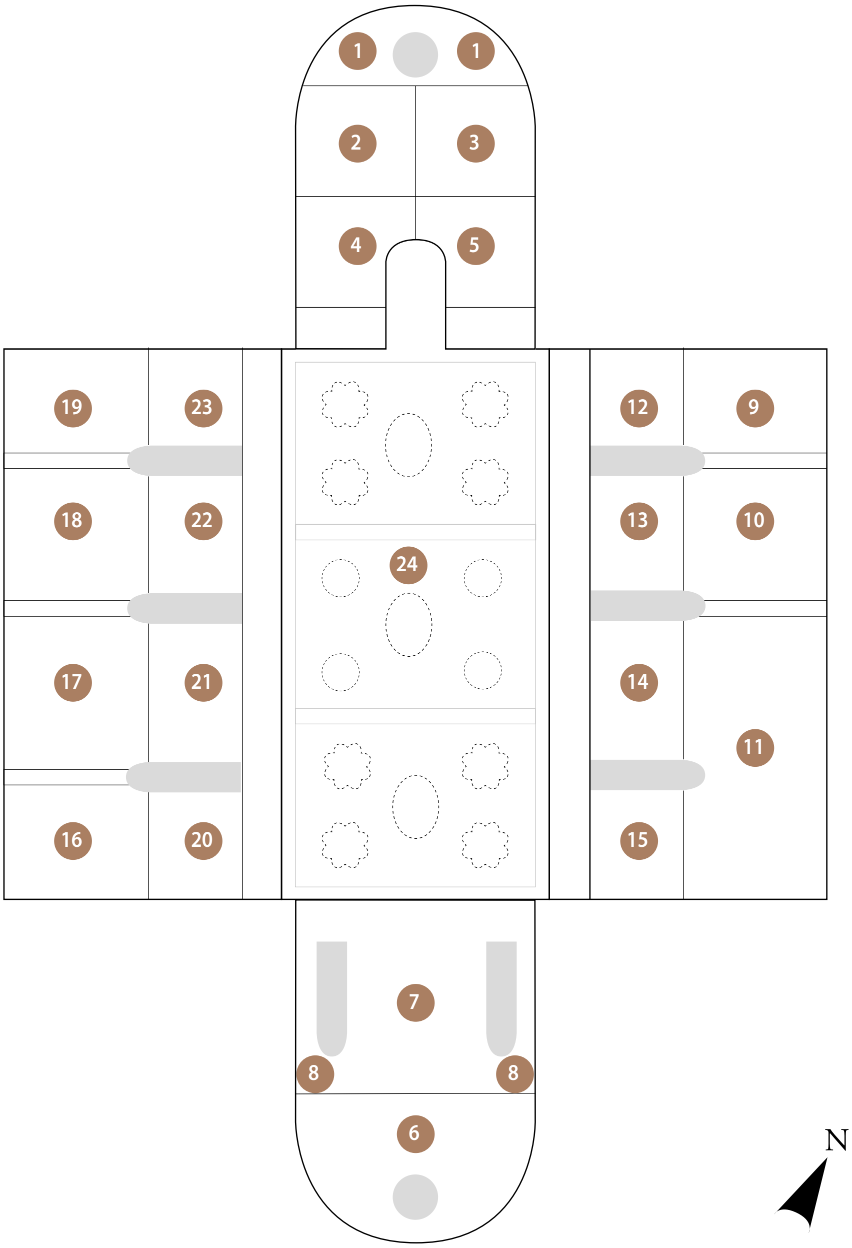
Inner wall of façade
1 *The Annunciation*
2 *The Adoration of the Shepherds*
3 *The Adoration of the Magi*
4 *The Flight into Egypt*
5 *Presentation of Christ in the Temple*

End Wall
6 *The Coronation of the Virgin*
7 *The Crucifixion*
8 *Emperors*

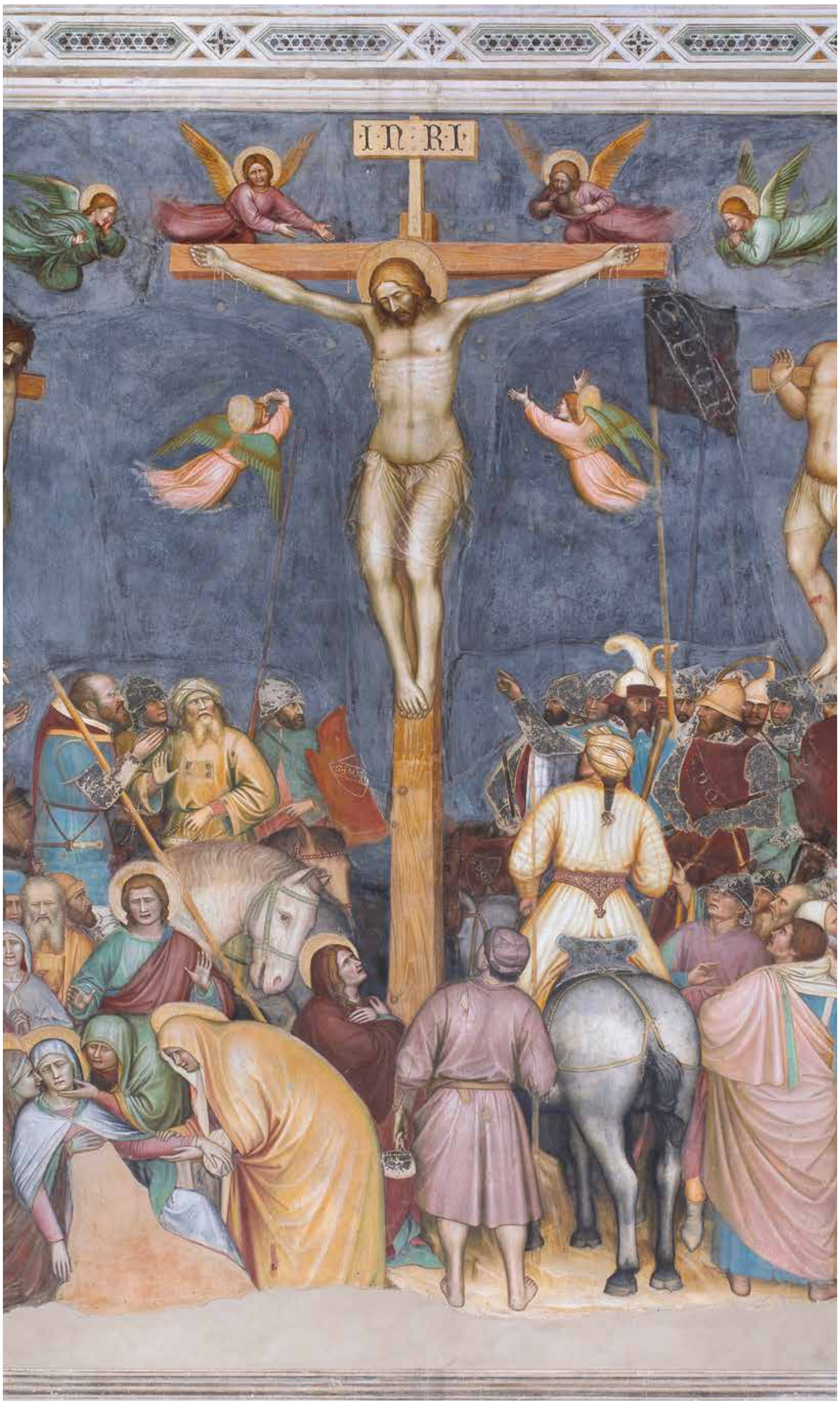
Left Wall
9 *St. George slays the Dragon in the presence of the Queen*
10 *The Baptism of King Servius*
11 *The Presentation of the Lupi family to the Virgin*
12 *St. George drinks Poison*
13 *The Martyrdom of St. George*
14 *The Pagan Temple collapses as St. George prays*
15 *The Beheading of St. George*

Right Wall
16 *St. Catherine of Alexandria beseeches Massentius on behalf of the Christians*
17 *St. Catherine confutes the arguments of pagan philosophers*
18 *St. Catherine and the Miracle of the Wheel*
19 *The Beheading of St. Catherine*
20 *St. Lucy is brought before the Consul Pascasius*
21 *St. Lucy refuses to marry and even oxen cannot drag her to the ceremony*
22 *The attempt to kill St. Lucy with fire and the wheel before she is beheaded*
23 *St. Lucy's final communion and funeral*

Vault
24 *Starred bands of decoration with St. Anthony, Angels, Prophets, Doctors of the Church and the Symbols of the Evangelists*



For various reasons this cycle may be considered a masterpiece that heralds the exploration of pictorial space that one finds in fifteenth-century art: the artist's command of his medium, his mastery of perspective and his careful rendering of visual reality. Certain features reveal Altichiero's clear intention to draw upon the model Giotto had established: the use of an architectural layout; the framing of the frescoes in different bands set one above the other; the starred vault complete with figures painted within tondi. Nevertheless, in the decoration of the Oratory of St. George this model is explored in a way that reflects the new style of International Gothic.

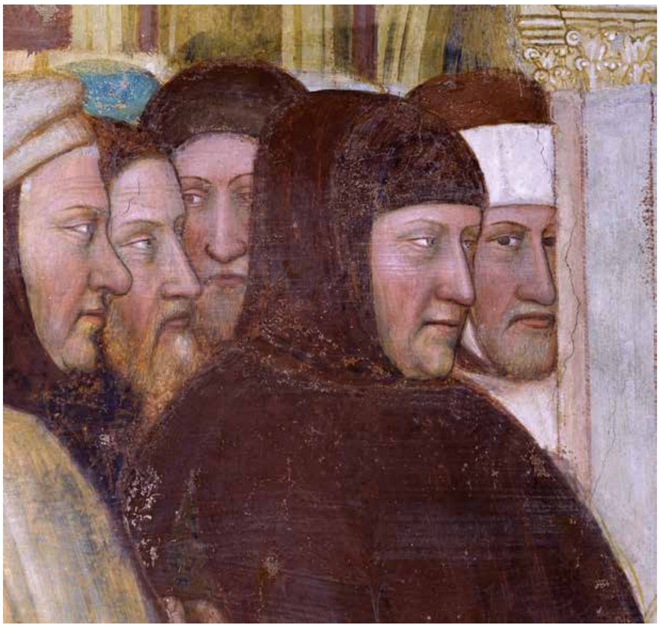


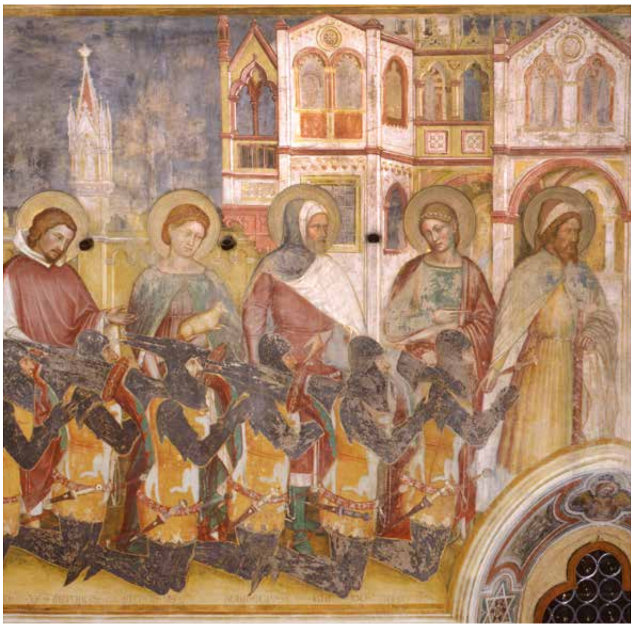
Ill. 58, Altichiero da Zevio, *The Crucifixion*, Oratory of St. George (detail)

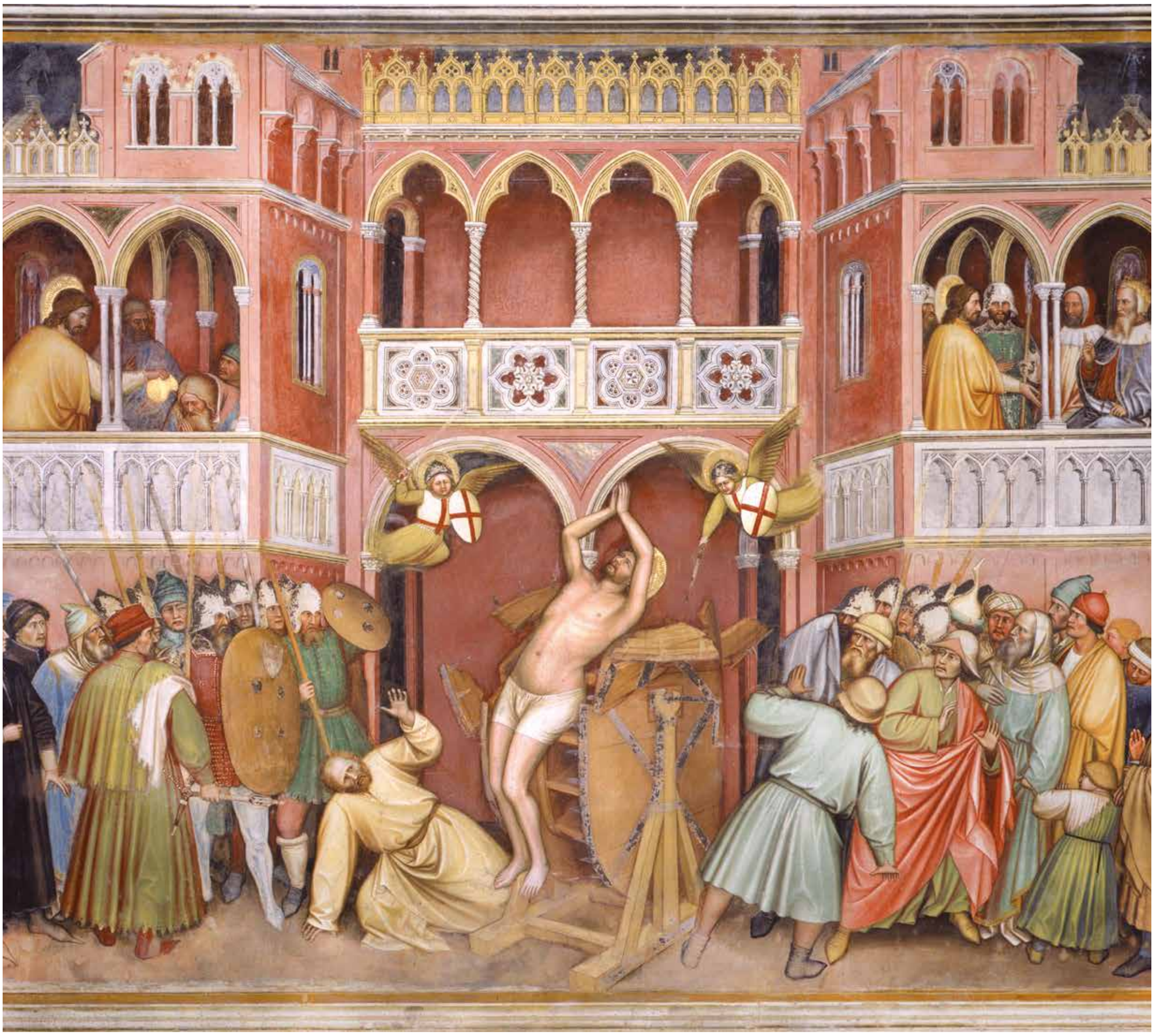
Ill. 59, Altichiero da Zevio, *The Baptism of King Servius*, Oratory of St. George (detail with portrait of Francesco Petrarch)

Ill. 60, Altichiero da Zevio, *The Presentation of the Lupi family to the Virgin*, Oratory of St. George (detail showing the commissioning patrons)

Ill. 61, Altichiero da Zevio, *The Martyrdom of St. George*, Oratory of St. George





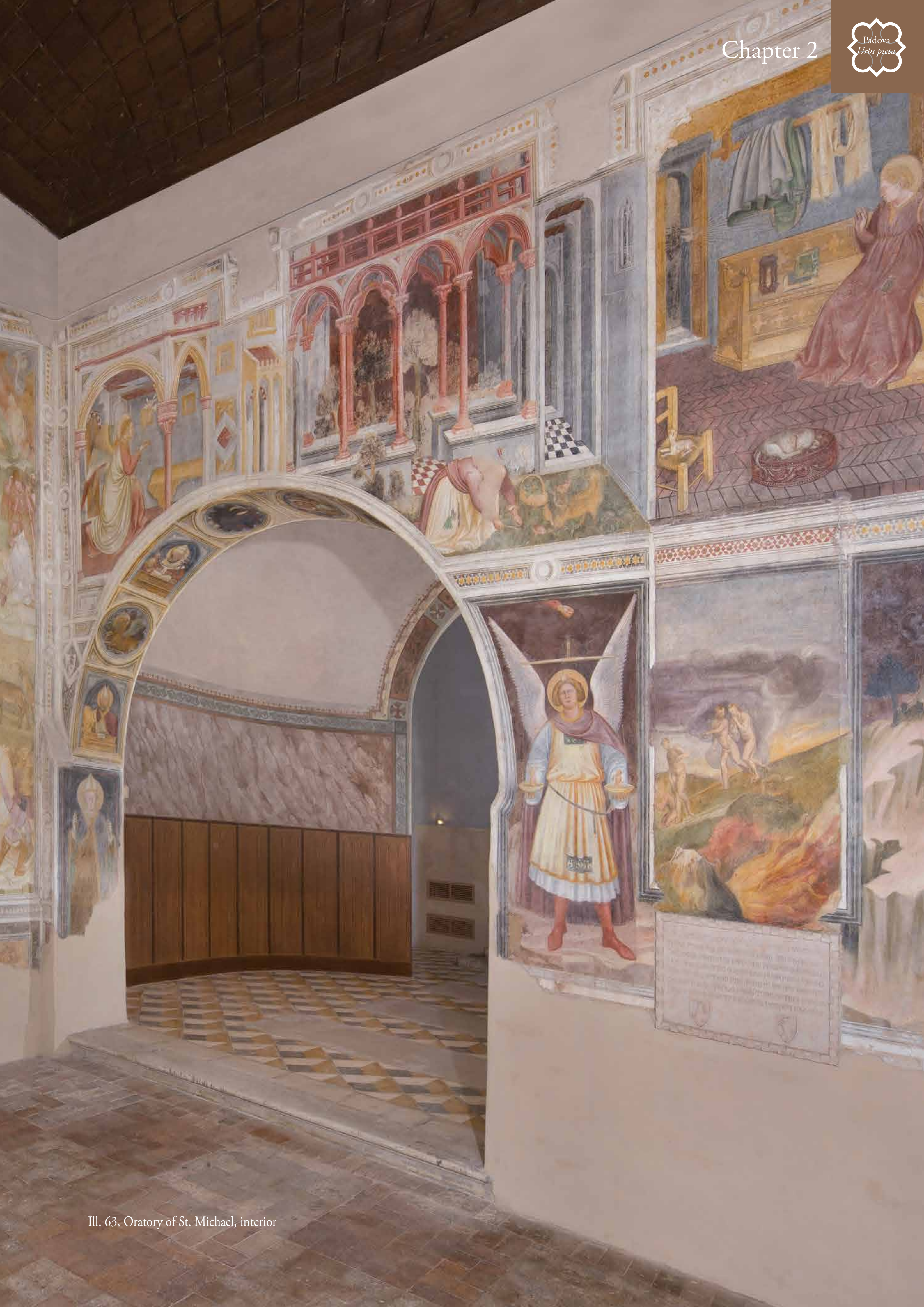


2.a.4
San Michele

Chapter 2

Oratory of St. Michael

Ill. 62, Oratory of St. Michael, exterior

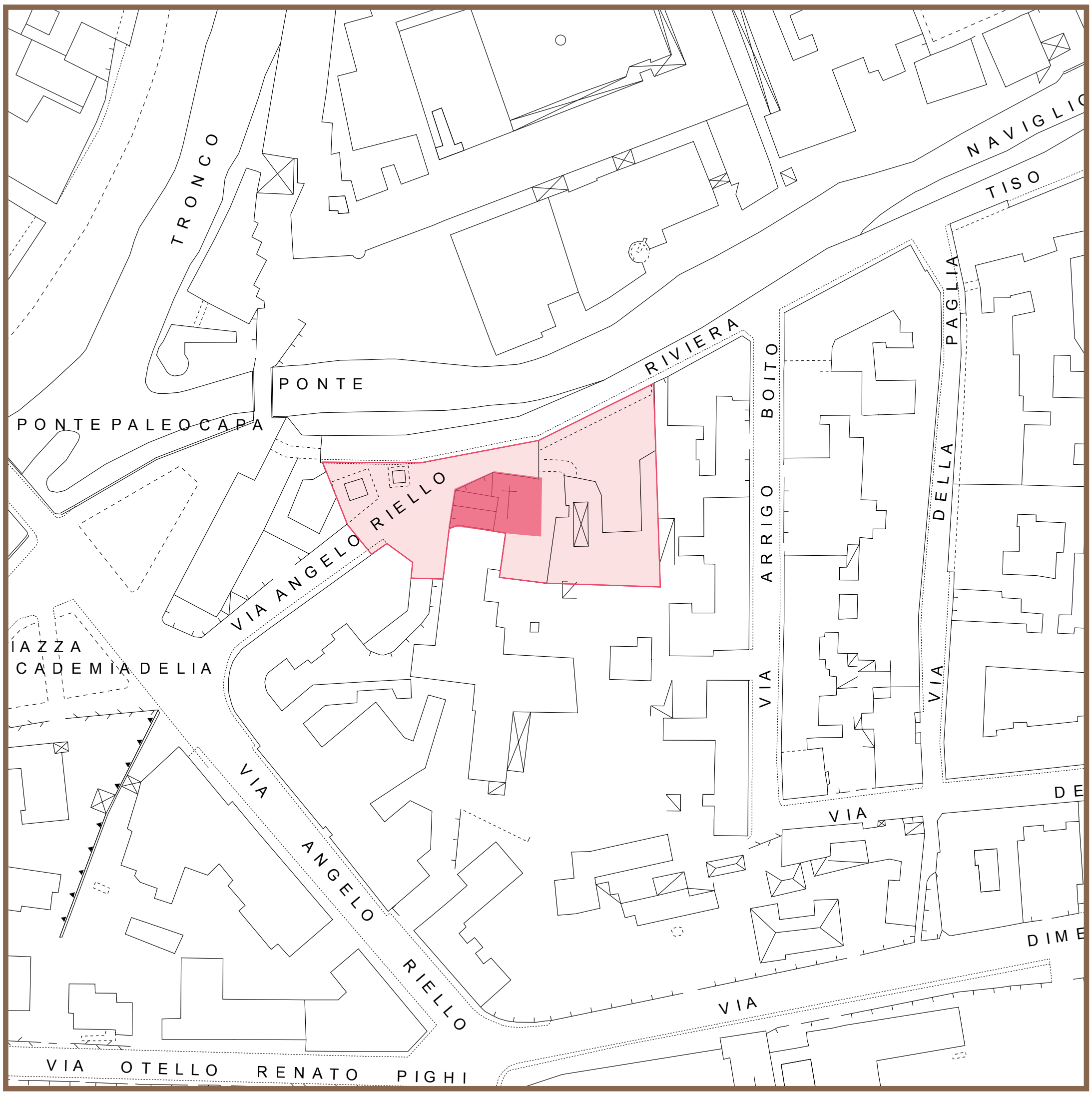


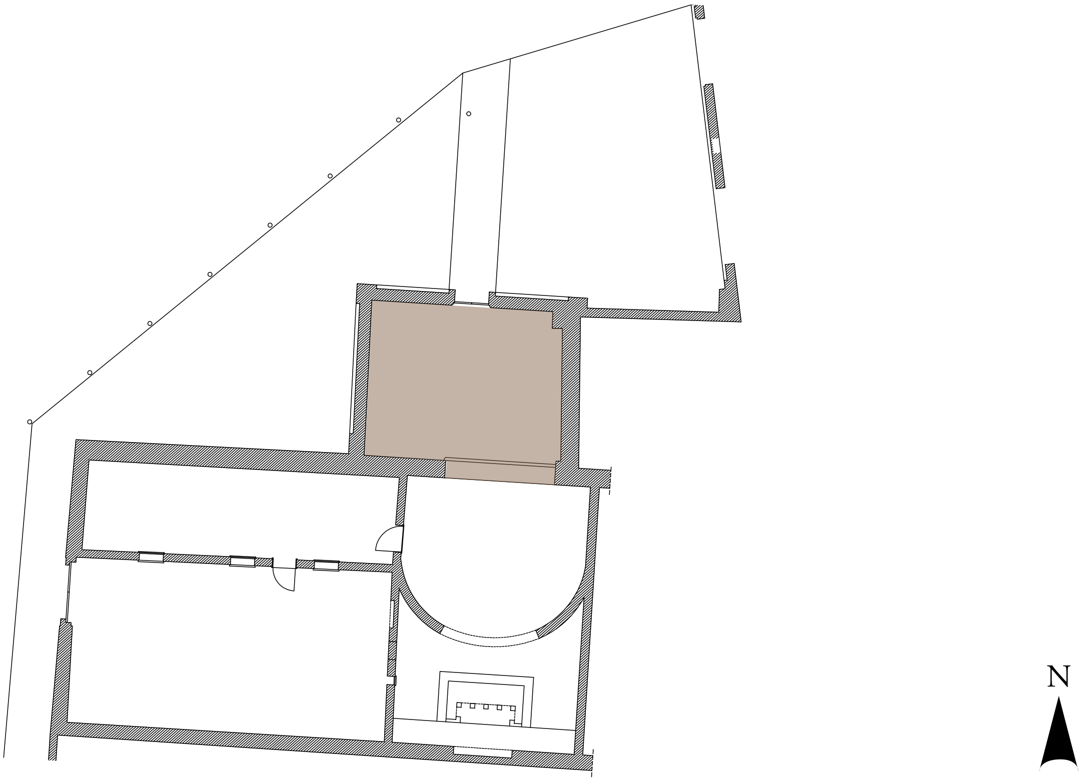
Ill. 63, Oratory of St. Michael, interior

Oratory of St. Michael

Description of the Building

Located close to the Torlonga del Castello Carrarese and backing onto the innermost circle of city walls, the Oratory of St. Michael stands on the site of a place of worship dedicated to The Holy Archangels which probably dated from the Byzantine or Longobard periods. It comprises two small spaces of rectangular floor plan, with a bare brick exterior crowned by a cornice with small projecting arches. The facade has a central rose window (aligned with the doorway) which is flanked by two long single-light windows. During the clashes between the Carraresi and the Visconti, which resulted in Francesco II Carraresi laying siege to Padua, a fire badly damaged the old church and the Bovi family took that opportunity to raise a new chapel, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, with access through an opening in the north wall. Thanks to the inscription on a stone plaque alongside the figure of St. Michael, we know: the date of construction (1397); the name of the man who commissioned the work (Pietro di Bartolommeo de Bovi, probably the cousin of an officer at the Carraresi Mint); and the name of the artist who painted the frescoes (Jacopo da Verona).


TRONCO
NAVIGLIO
TISO
RIVIERA
PONTE
PONTE PALEOCAPA
VIA ANGELO RIELLO
BOITO
ARRIGO
VIA
PAGLIA
DELLA
VIA
IAZZA
CADEMIA DELIA
VIA ANGELO RIELLO
DE
VIA
DIME
VIA
VIA OTELLO RENATO PIGHI


N

Plan of the Fresco Cycle in the Oratory of St. Michael

Legend

South Wall

1 *The Annunciation*

2 *The Archangel Michael*

East Wall

3 *The Nativity and the Adoration of the Magi*

North Wall

4 *The Ascension*

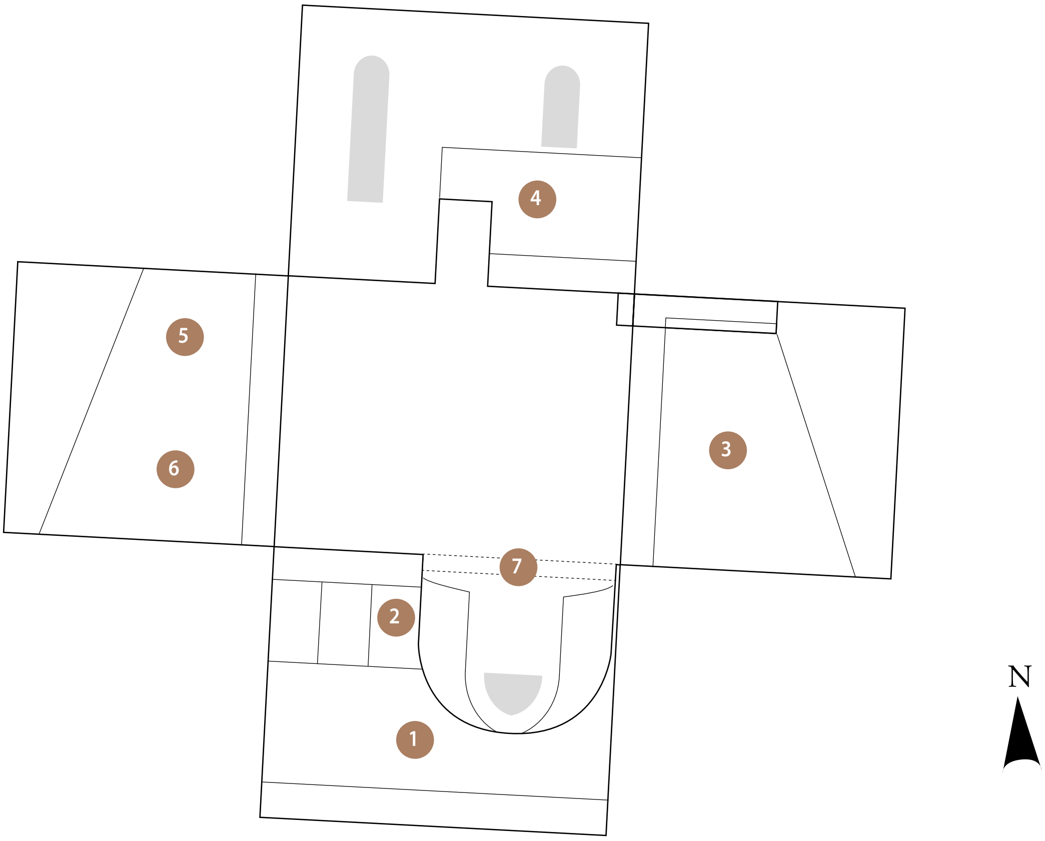
West Wall

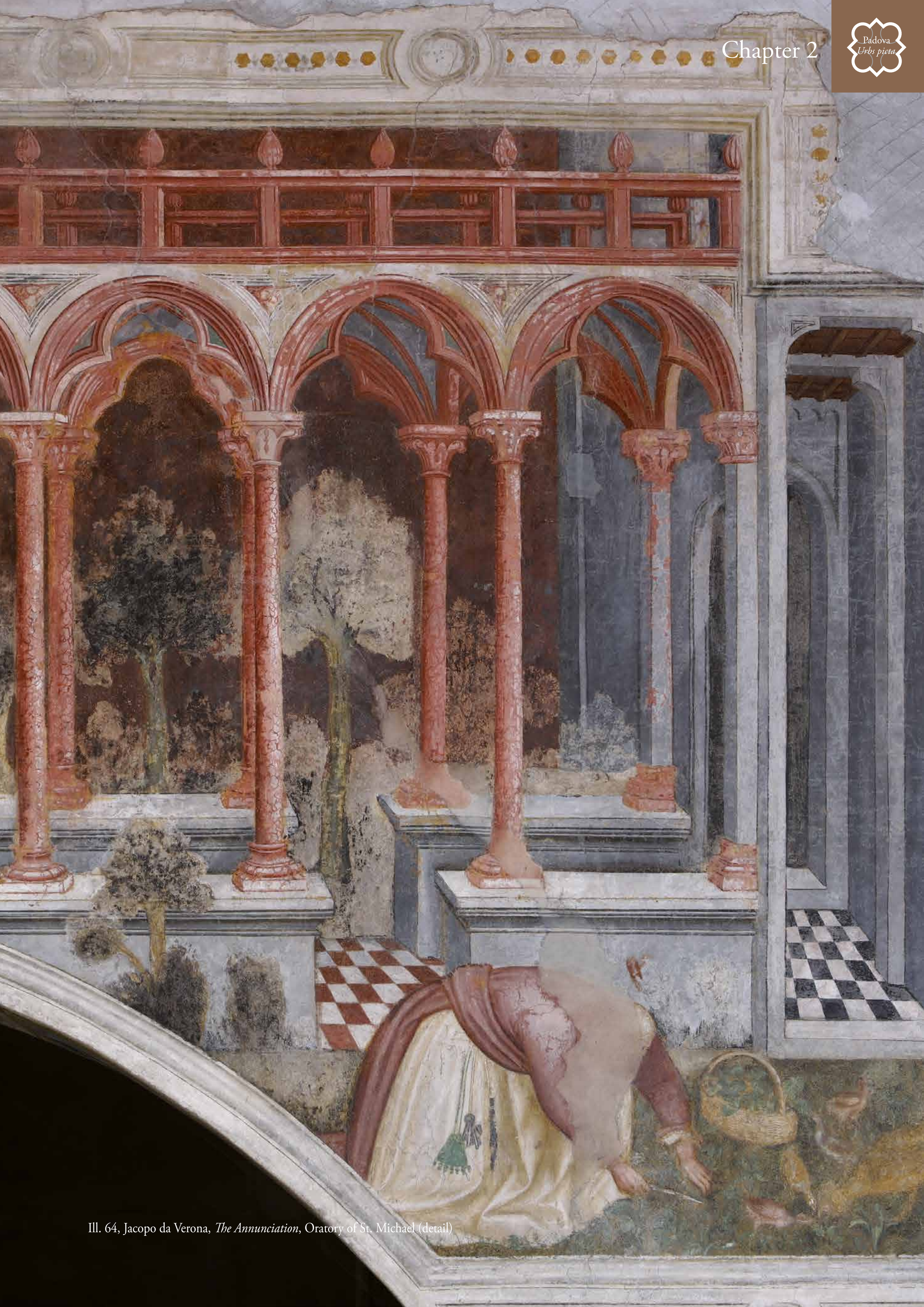
5 *Pentecost*

6 *The Death of the Virgin*

Intrados

7 *Doctors of the Church and the Symbols of the Evangelists*



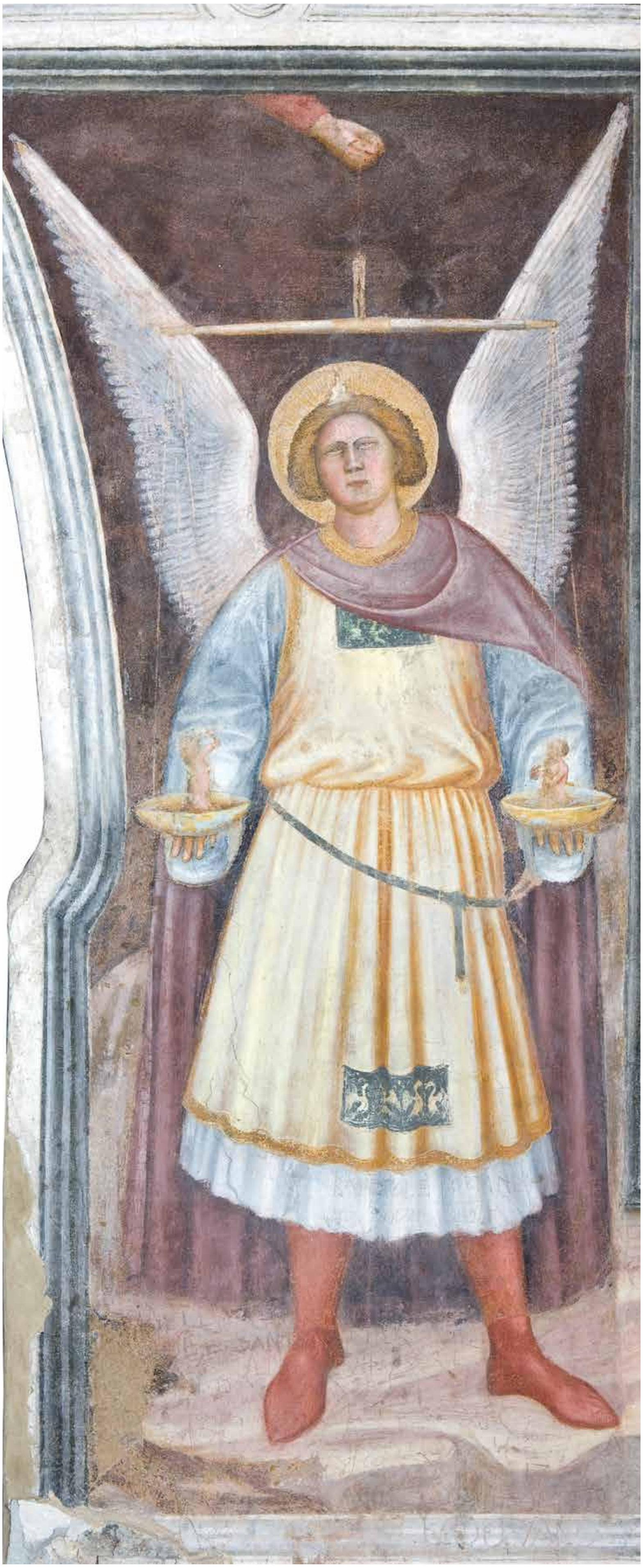


Ill. 64, Jacopo da Verona, *The Annunciation*, Oratory of St. Michael (detail)

Description of the Fresco Cycle

The artist commissioned to paint the St. Michael frescoes - Jacopo da Verona - had probably come to Padua following Altichiero da Zevio; the two would collaborate on the decoration of the Oratory of St. George (component part 3).

The frescoes within the Oratory of St. Michael recount five episodes from the *Life of the Virgin*, which unfold around the space in an anticlockwise direction. Within the series of cycles that make up the nomination, the works here mark the final example of the late-fourteenth-century frescoes in Padua that developed upon the innovative features introduced by Giotto. As we have seen, these features include: technical refinement in the medium itself; the exploitation of perspective to create a *trompe-l'oeil* architectural space; interest in the depiction of human feelings and emotions; a taste for narrative that leads to scenes from sacred history being given a contemporary setting and including various illustrious figures of the day. With regard to this latter point, Jacopo da Verona was such a skilled portraitist that it has been possible to identify various real-life characters in the retinue of figures within *The Adoration of the Magi*. Formerly, it was thought that the bearded figure in red wearing the fur hat was Francesco I da Carrara, and the man behind him, wearing a red hood, was Francesco Novello da Carrara; however, more recent interpretations, in part returning to the claims one finds in eighteenth-century guide books, have inverted the identifications. This means that the procession opens with the living Francesco II ('Il Novello'), behind

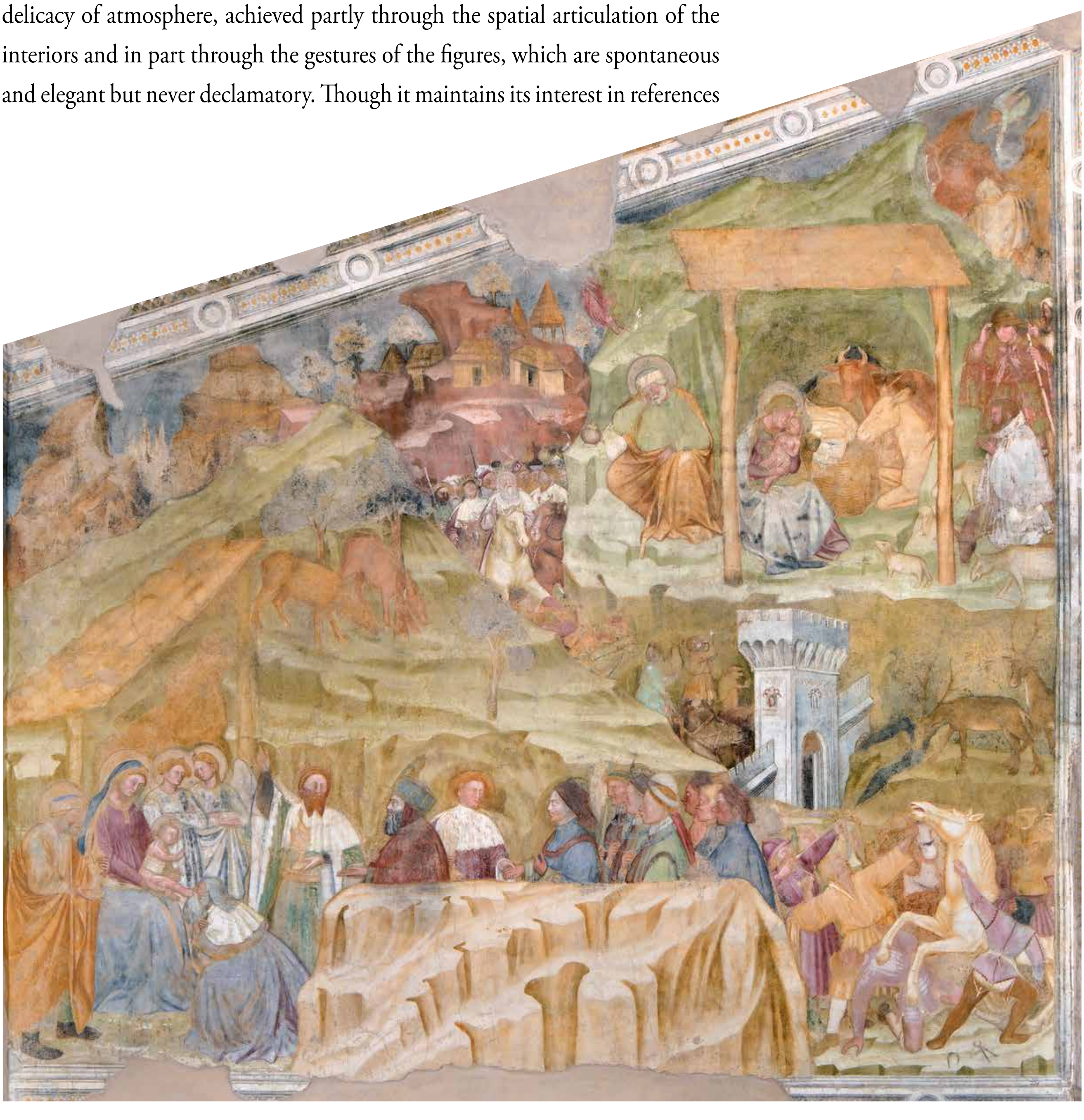


whom comes a then deceased member of the Carraresi dynasty (Francesco I had died four years earlier). The identification of the two men would also seem to be confirmed by their depiction in Altichiero da Zevio's fresco of *The King's Council* within the Chapel of St. James at the Basilica of St. Anthony (component part 3). It has also been argued that the figures seen in profile at *The Burial of the Virgin* may be members of the de Bovi family.

Jacopo da Verona developed in his own original way upon features to be found in the work of the leading painters of fourteenth-century Padua (Giotto, Altichiero, Giusto de' Menabuoi and Jacopo Avanzi). One aspect he devoted particular attention to was the rendering of portrait likenesses and naturalistic details - look, for example, at the animals in *The Annunciation* and the landscape in *The Adoration of the Magi*. Within his work there is also a certain refined delicacy of atmosphere, achieved partly through the spatial articulation of the interiors and in part through the gestures of the figures, which are spontaneous and elegant but never declamatory. Though it maintains its interest in references

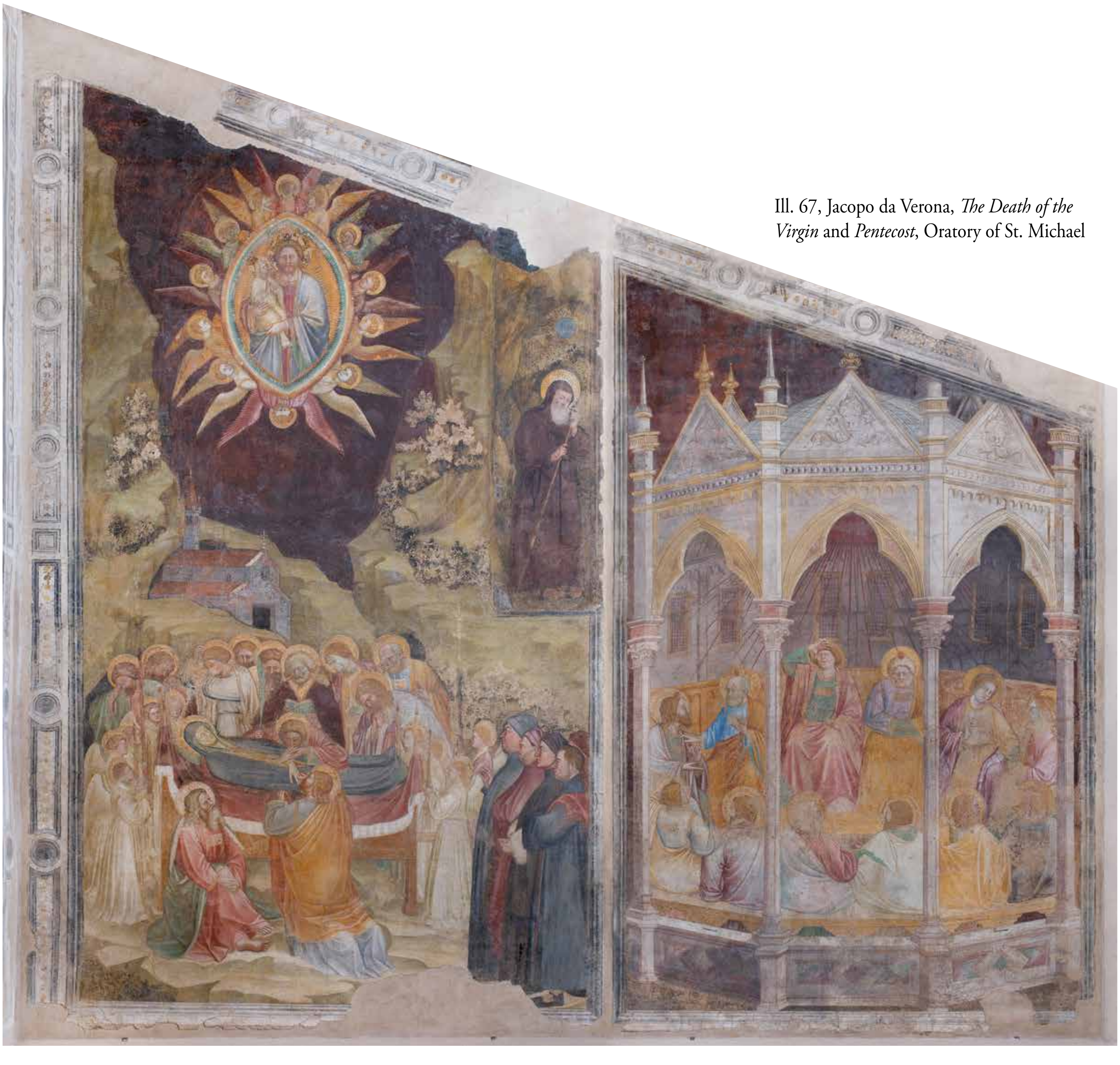
Ill. 65, Jacopo da Verona, *The Archangel Michael*, Oratory of St. Michael (detail)

Ill. 66, Jacopo da Verona, *The Nativity* and *The Adoration of the Magi*, Oratory of St. Michael



to contemporary everyday life and to political figures of the day, this new artistic language is imbued with a sense of religious intensity.

Like Giotto, Jacopo da Verona develops his narrative through scenes contained within painted frameworks. However, in the organisation of that narrative he draws upon the procedure developed by Altichiero da Zevio in the basilica's Chapel of St. James: whilst Giotto used simple correspondences in his narrative, Jacopo da Verona organized the sequence of events in scenes diagonally opposite each other. Also, the artist takes the concrete realism of the Scrovegni Chapel frescoes a step further: there is still attention to small everyday details but the overall atmosphere is one of courtly elegance. Even at the technical level there is a development upon the lessons learnt from Giotto, with Jacopo da Verona further exploring the interaction between different colours - in particular, in the modelling of volume and in the creation of effects of iridescence.



Ill. 67, Jacopo da Verona, *The Death of the Virgin* and *Pentecost*, Oratory of St. Michael

2.b History and Development

Historical Context

In the Late Middle Ages Padua established its reputation as a Free Commune, joining with both the Lega Veronese and the Lega Lombarda in their struggles against the emperor Federico Barbarossa. During this period of communal rule, the city became a wealthy place and, in 1222, saw the foundation of the University, one of the oldest in the world.

During the period of rule by Ezzelino III da Romano, Padua became aligned with Ghibelline (imperial) forces. However, after Ezzelino's death it would pass once more under the control of the Guelph (papal) party and be continually attacked by the Ghibelline forces of Verona - a conflict which ultimately led to the establishment of the Da Carrara (or Carraresi) family as lords of the city in 1318. This marked the beginning of a new period of splendour for Padua as a place in which both trade and the arts flourished, even if armed disputes with Verona, Venice and Milan continued to erupt. The ambitions of the Carraresi family put an end to the expansionism of the Scaligeri family of Verona, but they also led to their ultimate downfall: in 1405, during what was known as the War of Padua, the Republic of Venice would defeat the Carraresi and establish a dominion over the city that would last for centuries.

The fresco cycles covered by the nomination come within this time frame, having been created in a period that spans the entire fourteenth century: Giotto arrived in Padua in 1302, and in 1397 Jacopo da Verona would paint the fresco cycle in the Oratory of St. Michael. The various fresco cycles, therefore, chart the development of painting in fourteenth-century Padua following upon the model established by Giotto. One moves from the early appearance in the city of those who had collaborated with the Tuscan master in Rimini - Pietro and Giuliano da Rimini - to Guariento's frescoes in the middle of the century (which already display a certain 'courtly' atmosphere), through the work of artists such as Giusto de' Menabuoi, Altichiero da Zevio and Jacopo Avanzi in the 1370s-80s, to the frescoes of Jacopo da Verona, active towards the end of the century.

Chronology of the Main Fresco Cycles

c.1302	Giotto (attrib.), Basilica of St. Anthony, Chapel of the Black Madonna [component part 3]
c.1302-1303	Giotto (attrib.), Monastery of Il Santo, Chapter Hall [component part 3]
c.1303-1305	Giotto, Basilica of St. Anthony, Benediction Chapel (or St. Catherine Chapel) [component part 3]
1303-1305	Giotto, Scrovegni Chapel [component part 1]
1317 ante 1324	Master of the Scrovegni Choir, Scrovegni Chapel, choir [component part 1]
c.1310-1317	Giotto, Palazzo della Ragione (lost work) [component part 2]
1338	Guariento, Church of the Eremitani (or Church of Santi Filippo e Giacomo agli Eremitani), Chapel of St. Anthony Abbot (now, Chapel of St. Anthony of Padua), [component part 1]
ante 1354	Guariento, Chapel of the Carraresi Palace [component part 2]
1361-1365	Guariento, Church of the Eremitani, presbytery and apse, Great Chapel [component part 1]
c.1370	Giusto de’ Menabuoi, Scrovegni Chapel, choir, tribune [component part 1]
1370	Giusto de’ Menabuoi, Church of the Eremitani, Cortellieri Chapel [component part 1]
c.1370	Giusto de’ Menabuoi, Basilica of St. Anthony, Vignonza Tomb [component part 3]
1375-1376	Giusto de’ Menabuoi, Cathedral Baptistery (Part 2)1375-1378, Altichiero da Zevio and Jacopo Avanzi, Basilica of St. Anthony, St. James Chapel (of Chapel of St James and St. Felix) [component part 3]
1382	Giusto de’ Menabuoi, Basilica of St. Anthony (Chapel of Blessed Luca Belludi or of St. Philip and St. James, also the conti Chapel) [component part 3]
1379-1384	Altichiero da Zevio and Jacopo da Verona, Oratory of St. George [component part 3]
1397	Jacopo da Verona, Oratory of St. Michael [component part 4]

Cultural Context

Giotto's arrival in Padua marked the beginning of a period of cultural and artistic development within the city that culminated during the time the Carraresi were lords of the city. During these decades, it was not only painting that flourished: literature and the sciences, too, benefitted from the patronage of a network of illustrious families associated with the Carraresi court.

Within this context, the fresco cycles can be seen as embodying the political use of visual images. Beginning with the work commissioned by Enrico Scrovegni, this exploitation of such images would find its highest expression in the frescoes commissioned by the Carraresi rulers of the city and the aristocratic families linked with their court. These patrons wanted the visual arts to be an expression of power, offering a refined account of the city as both a real and an idealized place, and portraying the contemporary individuals who actually exercised political power. All of this occurred at a key period in the history of art, as the painting of the late thirteenth century was giving way to what would become known as the Renaissance.

The dynamic cultural life of Padua was also fuelled by the networks linking patrons, artists, theologians, philosophers, men-of-letters and scholars; such links existed not only within the Carraresi court but also within the university and the various cultural circles that thrived inside monasteries. It was within this context that one sees the emergence of such figures as Fra Giovanni degli Eremitani, Alberto da Padova, Altegrado dei Cattanei and Pietro d'Abano. Drawing upon a range of sacred and hagiographical texts, these intellectuals would provide the philosophical and religious inspiration for the iconography chosen in various fresco cycles.

All of this was possible because, from the beginning of the fourteenth century onwards, Padua provided a political, cultural and social environment that benefitted from a period of peace, stability and orderly development. It was a time of both economic and demographic growth which saw various of the town's merchant burgher class raised to the nobility. As Padua became a model for other Italian cities, these new aristocrats would, just like the Commune before them, call upon the artists of the day to decorate their palazzi and chapels.

One of the most important cultural figures then present in Padua was Francesco Petrarch, who had been called to the court of the Carraresi by Jacopo II and would, from 1348 onwards, reside in the city for various periods; in 1370 he would then move to the nearby Arquà, where his house is now a museum. A poet and scholar of Petrarch's standing was obviously a great point of reference within the city, not only amongst writers but also amongst artists: his own work - or simply his mere presence - inspired the iconography of various works of painting, in part due to his links with other court intellectuals (for example, his secretary Lombardo della Seta). Such noteworthy interchange between literary and artistic culture was something that Padova had already witnessed, in the relation between Dante and Giotto.

Such interaction between patrons, theologians, philosophers and men-of-letters extended beyond the literary sphere. It would seem, for example, that the research into the physical sciences then being pursued at Padua University - in particular, the work of Pietro d'Abano, present in the city between 1298 and 1302 - would also influence Giotto's exploration of the use of perspective. Similarly, academic studies of the stars and the motion of the celestial bodies appears to have inspired the first realistic and highly unconventional depiction of Halley's comet - in the Scrovegni Chapel *Nativity* - and the other frescoes of planets and stars which Giotto painted in the Palazzo della Ragione.

Historical-Artistic Context

The history of painting in fourteenth-century Padua can be said to have begun with Giotto's arrival there around 1302. There were close links between the city and Florence, and it was probably the Franciscan monks of the Basilica of St. Anthony who called the artist to work for them.

Giotto painted his first fresco cycles in the city within the Basilica and Monastery of St. Anthony around that year. Probably, the first were in the Chapel of the Black Madonna, a place of great symbolic significance because it was then the burial place of St. Anthony himself, and in the Chapter Hall, a place of fundamental importance in monastery life. Within the Basilica he would then paint the frescoes in the Benediction Chapel. This was under the patronage of the Scrovegni family, and it would be for their family chapel that he later, in 1303-1305, painted his most marvellous cycle of frescoes.

Giotto's third period of work in Padua was between 1310 and 1317, when he painted an extraordinary cycle of astrological frescoes in the Palazzo della Ragione. Those works were unfortunately destroyed by a fire in 1420, but what makes the cycle still so significant is that, in the years immediately after that fire, the entire scheme was repainted on the basis of Giotto's original iconography.

Almost as soon as Giotto had left the city, artists there began to develop upon the lessons that could be learnt from him. For example, the so-called Master of the Scrovegni Choir - who takes his name from the location of the *Scenes from the Life of the Virgin* he painted some time between 1317 and 1320 - expressed himself in a language which may have been more elementary than that of the Tuscan master but clearly owes a debt to him.

Then, in 1324, the Eremite Order of Augustinian monks (*Eremitani*) would call to the city Giotto's pupils, Pietro and Giuliano da Rimini, who would create a polyptych for their church (now lost) and a large fresco for the monastery (part of which can now be seen in the Musei Civici degli Eremitani). In that latter work, scenes such as *The Coronation of the Virgin*, *The Crucifixion* and others show the artists applying what they had learnt from Giotto in Rimini and updating it on the basis of the recent work he had done in Padua.

One then sees the emergence of the most important figure in mid-fourteenth-century painting in Padua: Guariento da Arpo. Active from the 1330s onwards, he was the first artist to be appointed as court painter to the Carraresi, and it was he who decorated the tombs of Jacopo and Ubertino da Carrara that formerly stood in the church of St. Augustine. In a career spanning more than thirty years, his work would develop an evermore linear, International Gothic, style as he became increasingly skilful in the composition of large courtly scenes within *trompe-l'oeil* perspective spaces. Guariento's frescoes and panel paintings for the Chapel of the Carraresi Palace are famous, and his art was appreciated well beyond Padua: Doge Marco Corner, for example, would commission him to paint the large fresco of *Paradise* in the Doge's Palace (probably 1365-1367). The artist's last great work, the imposing frescoed decoration of the main apse of the Church of the Eremitani, shows the mastery he had acquired in the handling of large scenes within spatially complex settings.

This skill was also paramount for the painter who would replace Guariento at the Carraresi court: the Florentine Giusto de' Menabuoi. Active in Padua from the beginning of the 1370s until his death in the 1390s, this artist would open the way for further development within Padua of the International Gothic style. In scenes that show an ever greater command of perspective, he depicts biblical events as if they were courtly ceremonies, complete with recognisable portraits of the key figures of the day.

The frescoes in the Cortellieri Chapel in the Church of the Eremitani had already revealed Giusto de' Menabuoi's great knowledge of his art, but his real masterpiece is the fresco cycle in the Cathedral Baptistery, on which he began working in 1375. The building was intended as a mausoleum for Francesco I da Carrara and his wife Fina Buzzaccarini, and here the artist produced works in which he demonstrated his full refinement as a narrative painter, creating complex compositions whose iconographical content was often highly innovative. In the frescoes in the Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi within the Basilica del Santo, which date from 1382, the greater space available made it possible for de' Menabuoi to measure himself against the work of other artists - the Bologna-born Jacopo Avanzi and the Verona-born Altichiero da Zavio; these two had, just a short time before, been commissioned by the *marchese* Lupi da Soragna to paint the frescoes on the walls of the Chapel of St. James, narrating religious scenes with both courtly elegance and a new level of natural ease.

The frescoes in the Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi stand out as evidence of the artist's ever increasing skill in the handling of large spaces and sizeable groups of figures, his rich and yet delicate palette and his ever more striking command of perspective, which would not be matched until the work of Early Renaissance Tuscan artists. In the early 1380s, Altichiero would also paint the frescoes in the Chapel of St. George, narrating *Scenes from the Lives of Saints George, Barbara, Catherine and Lucy*, the patron saints of the Lupi di Soragna family. Here the action plays out against views of an idealised Gothic city, with an increasing number of figures who are portraits of court personalities - for example, Francesco Petrarch, a guest and dignitary at the Carraresi court.

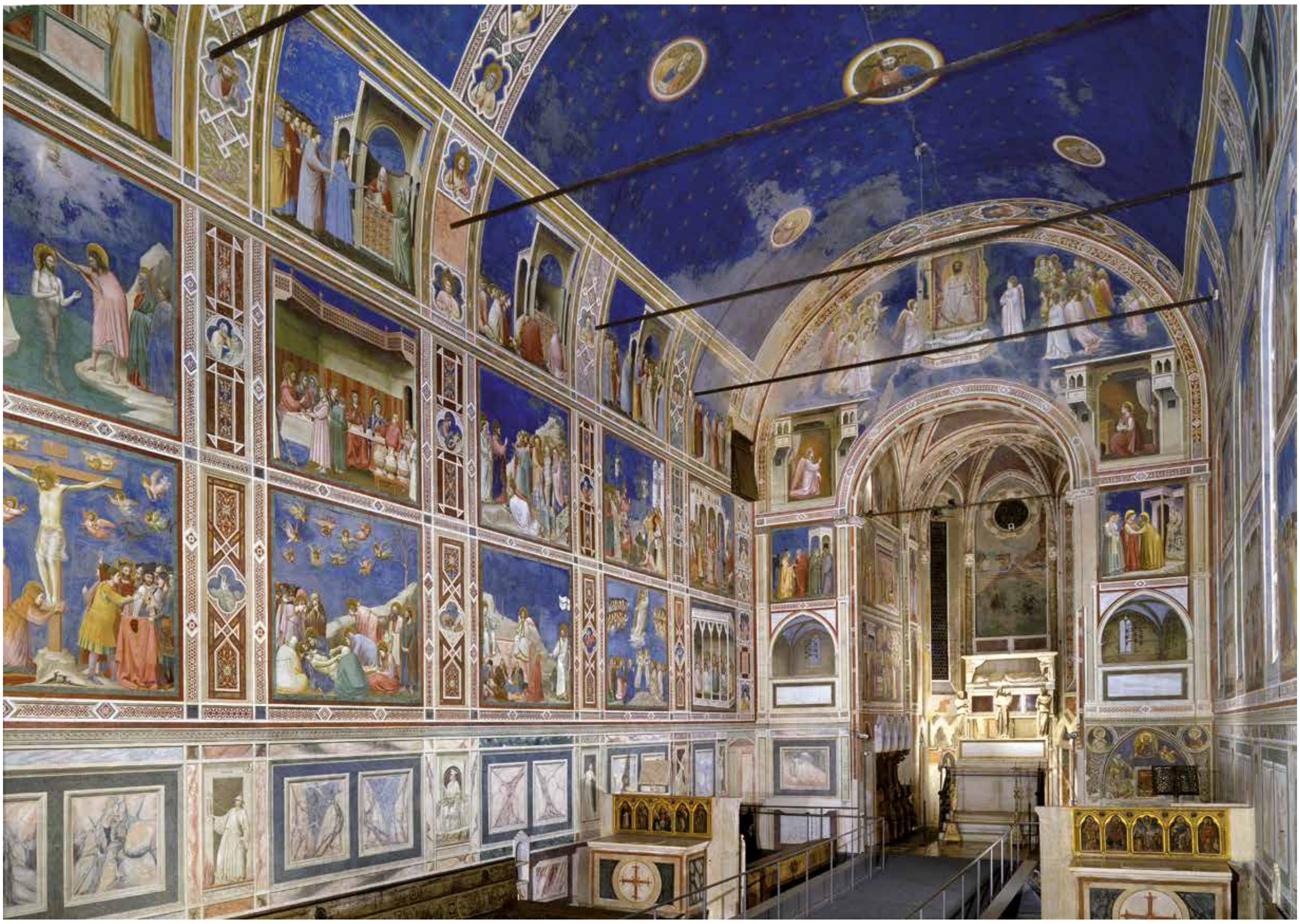
De' Menabuoi's pupil, Jacopo da Verona would then, in 1397, complete the last in this series of fresco cycles of a certain importance, in the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin within the Oratory of St. Michael. Here, the *Scenes from the Life of the Virgin* contain what are portraits of members of the Carraresi court, which was then approaching its end. Just a few years later - in 1405 - Padua came under Venetian rule, and with the disappearance of the Carraresi court the principal source of artistic patronage in the city also disappeared. Nevertheless, right up to the end, artistic life centring around these lords of the city remained active: documentary evidence shows the presence in their court of the Tuscan Cennino Cennini, whose manual on artistic techniques - the first extant work of its kind - was written while he was in Padua in the service of Francesco II da Carrara.

One should also mention here various cycles that have been lost due to the passage of time or the actions of man - for example, those in the churches of Sant'Agostino and San Benedetto, or the decorations in the Da Carrara Palace. While their loss is regrettable, the frescoes that do survive are enough to give one a full idea of a body of work that marks one of the most extraordinary and original developments in Italian painting.

Ill. 68, Gold ducat from the time of Francesco 'Il Vecchio' da Carrara (1378-1388), Padua, Musei Civici, Museo Bottacin

2.b.1 Scrovegni and Eremitani

Scrovegni Chapel



Ill. 69, Scrovegni Chapel, interior

Now set amongst the greenery of the Giardini dell'Arena (Arena Public Gardens), this chapel stands on ground that Enrico Scrovegni purchased from Manfredo Dalesmanini on 6 February 1300; the area alongside it was once occupied by the Scrovegni family palazzo. The commission to paint the fresco cycle came about because Giotto was already in the city of Padua, working at the Basilica of St. Anthony on the fresco cycles in the Chapel of the Black Madonna, the Chapter Hall and the Benediction Chapel (this latter being under the patronage of the Scrovegni family). Tradition has it that Enrico Scrovegni - son of the Reginaldo Scrovegni who figures amongst the usurers that Dante mentions in his *Inferno* (Canto XVII) - commissioned the work as atonement for his father's sins, an offering for the repose of his soul. However, more recent studies have shown that though Reginaldo was involved in financial activities, these had never caused any difficulties in his relationship with the Church. And Enrico himself continued his father's business affairs whilst maintaining close links with the ecclesiastical authorities; indeed, he would (on I March 1304) get the pope, Benedict XI, to grant an indulgence for all those who visited the chapel he had created. The sole difficulty in his relations with clerics was with the friars of the nearby Monastery of the Eremitani, who - on 9 January 1305, just ten weeks before the Chapel was due to be consecrated - protested to the Episcopal Vicar that Scrovegni had been granted permission to build solely a small oratory for private devotion but had actually built a veritable church, complete with altars and decoration, which was an expression “more of ostentation, vainglory and opulence than of praise, glory and honour to God”. Their objection to such magnificence is perhaps understandable, given the chapel's closeness to their own monastery and Church of the Eremitani; however, their protests must have come to nothing because, for the consecration ceremony itself, Enrico Scrovegni actually managed to borrow some of the sacred vestments from St. Mark’s in Venice.

So what was the real reason for this commission? Recent studies have shown the leading role that Enrico Scrovegni played in the *Confraternità dei Gaudenti*, a religious confraternity whose goal was to promote veneration of the Virgin and combat usury - a combination that would explain why the Scrovegni Chapel was originally dedicated to Santa Maria della Carità. Furthermore, one might also see it as a fruit of Enrico’s concern with the eternal repose of his own soul, conveniently combined with a strong desire to benefit his family in the fierce competition for status amongst the city’s aristocratic households. The statue of the donor in the chapel sacristy - plus the portrait of him in Giotto’s fresco - reveal a highly unusual level of self-celebration.

The artist he would chose to achieve this range of objectives was Giotto, whose work in the city would be highly innovative. To appreciate just how innovative, one only has to look at the radical change in artistic language which occurred over the period from the completion of Giotto’s work on the Basilica Superiore at Assisi to the artist’s stay in Padua, following periods in Rome and then Rimini. Unfortunately, one cannot fully chart Giotto’s development to artistic maturity because the extant frescoes in the Lateran Palace in Rome and the church of San Francesco in Rimini are no longer legible. However, there is no doubt that in the frescoes he painted in Padua one can see details and features that reveal Giotto’s exposure to the art of classical antiquity - look, for example, at the faux marble dado with allegorical figures of *Vices* and *Virtues*, which can clearly be seen in relation to Roman art.

The work on the Scrovegni Chapel frescoes proceeded very quickly, over the period from 25 March 1303, the day the building was dedicated to the Virgin, to the date of the consecration (25 March 1305), and it is clear that the written sources Giotto drew upon were: *The New Testament*, the *Apocrypha*, Jacopo da Varazze’s *Golden Legend*, and the *Physiologus* (written in Alexandria some time between the second and fourth century AD). The overall work can also be seen

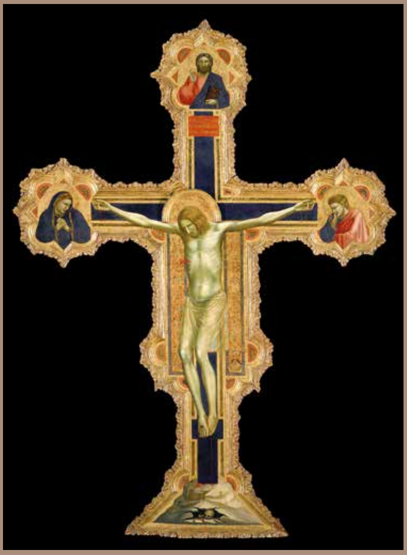
Fourteenth-century works in the Musei Civici agli Eremitani

Exploration of painting in fourteenth-century Padua also requires a visit to the Musei Civici, which now, for reasons of conservation, houses two works from the Scrovegni Chapel itself: the panel depicting *God the Father* and a *Crucifix*, both by Giotto. The same room also contains 18 fragments from frescoes by Pietro and perhaps Giuliano da Rimini; painted for the Monastery of the Eremitani. These were removed in the nineteenth century when a wall was demolished, and are now displayed in a way which is as close as possible to their initial installation.

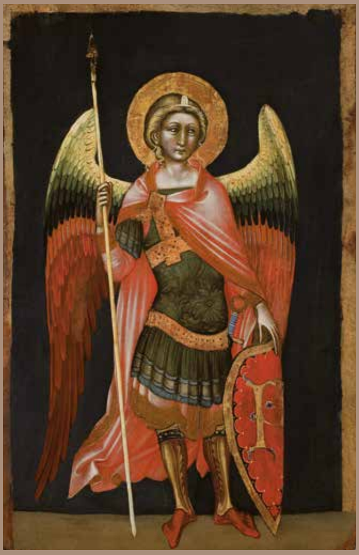
The painting of *God the Father* was originally set amongst the frescoes on the arched wall through to the presbytery in the Scrovegni Chapel. The presence of its original iron hinges, plus the fact that the work is in tempera on a poplar wood panel rather than fresco on plaster, show that this must once have been the door to a space whose function is now unknown. As for the panel of the Crucifix, this too dates from the same period as the Scrovegni frescoes. On one side it depicts Christ suffering on a Cross which is flanked by the Virgin and St. John the Evangelist - the degree of realism is clear from the half-opened lips through which one can see the figures' teeth. Above this scene of the suffering at Golgotha Christ is shown in triumph. Giotto follows an ancient iconographical tradition by depicting the blood of the crucified Christ falling on a skull. This skull is traditionally identified as Adam's - Golgotha was said to have been his burial place - and serves to signify that from the sacrifice which redeemed the sins of Adam and Eve would grow the Tree of Life. The background is painted in imitation of a silk fabric, probably lampas. Badly damaged due to long contact with damp surfaces, the rear of the panel has a *Lamb of God* at the junction of arms of the Cross, which end in tondi with the symbols of the Four Evangelists.

The frescoes by Pietro and Giuliano da Rimini - from the very monastery which now houses the museum - represent one of the earliest examples of the heights that could be achieved as the example of Giotto's art spread through northern Italy.

The museum also contains a small room which, on the basis of extant evidence, reproduces a close approximation to the original layout of Guariento's panel paintings in the chapel of the Carraresi Palace. Dating from rather later in the fourteenth century, another work in the museum is Cennino Cennini's *Madonna dell'Umilità*. This fresco, together with a fresco now in the Uffizi in Florence, is all that remains of his work and was perhaps commissioned by the Lupi di Soragna family.



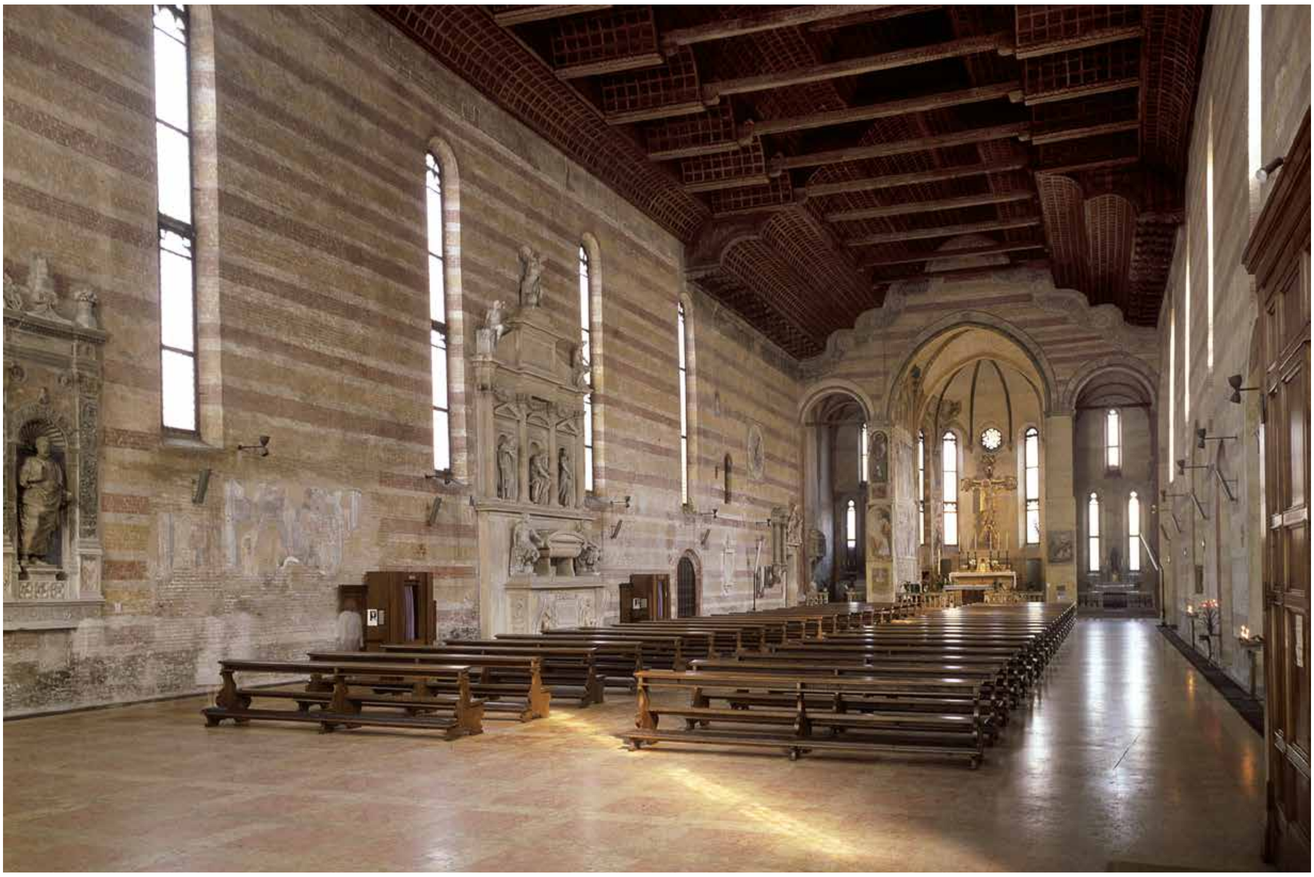
Ill. 70, Giotto, *Crucifix*, tempera on wood panel, Padua, Musei Civici agli Eremitani



Ill. 71, Guariento, *Angel armed with spear and shield* (Principalities), tempera on wood panel, Padua, Musei Civici agli Eremitani in relation to the dramas inspired by sacred history. This is clear not only in the manner in which real and pictorial space are made one through the interplay of painted and actual architectural features (a strategy that would reach its highest development in the work of Altichiero da Zevio) but also in the portrayal of the figures, who interact dynamically with each other and with the spectator. A significant example of this link with sacred theatre is *The Mocking of Christ*: here, Giotto shows each of the figures performing one of the actions recounted in the gospel account, which had subsequently been part of the religious dramas ritually performed during Holy Week.

As for the building itself, it would remain private property until 1880, when the conflict between the Foscari Gradenigo family and Padua City Council came to an end, with the Chapel coming under public ownership. (The authorities had been concerned that, after the collapse of the portico in front of the chapel in 1817 and the demolition of the Scrovegni palazzo in 1824, the chapel itself might suffer the same fate.) After this transfer, the City Council began a new programme of restoration work.

Church of the Eremitani



Ill. 72, Church of the Eremitani, interior

The Church of Santi Filippo e Giacomo agli Eremitani - to give its full name - was a foundation linked with the first settlement of the Augustinian Friars Eremite in the city, of which there is record as far back as 1218. According to the Paduan notary Antonio Monterosso, this was the date of foundation of "an ancient church where the Eremite Fathers of Saint Augustine officiated", a church which was dedicated to saints Philip and James. Sources say that the small structure soon proved to be inadequate for the number of the faithful who were already worshipping there by 1237, and in 1259 a donation provided the monks with the land necessary for a larger chapel. Work began there in 1264; however, the poverty of the Order meant that even this new building had to be of modest size. Then, in 1276, the *podestà*, Roberto de Roberti, promoted a plan for the Commune to finance the building of a larger church with a wood-beam and tiled roof, the plan of which is still largely reflected in the present building.

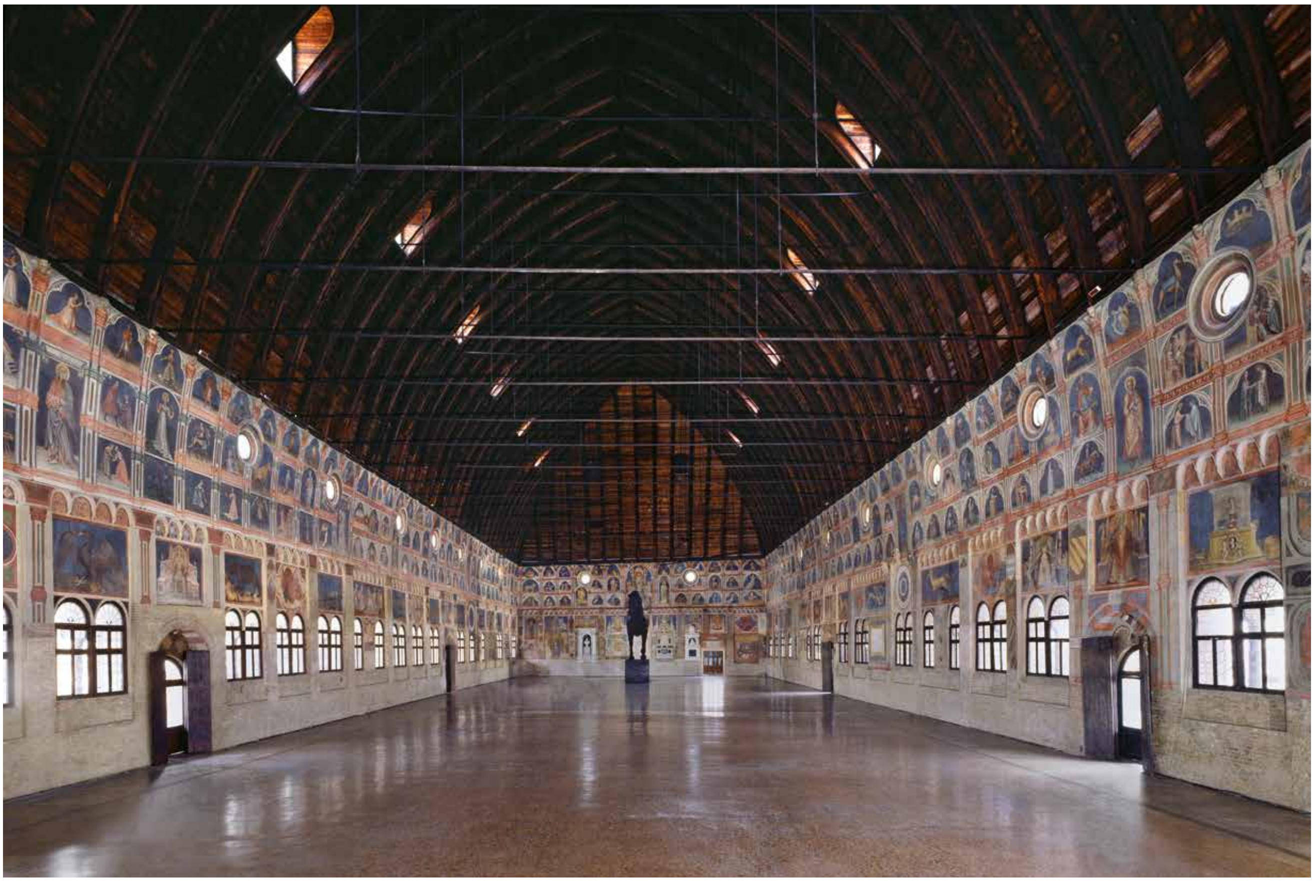
In 1306, work on the facade was undertaken by Fra Giovanni degli Eremitani, an interesting figure who showed great technical skill and design flair as an *enzignerio* (engineer) and seems to have already been famous by 1289, the earliest recorded date of his presence in Padua. Unfortunately, very little remains of the projects he undertook within the commune. For example, his roof in the Palazzo della Ragione was completely destroyed and that in the Church of the Eremitani partially damaged, even if there is reliable evidence that their replacements kept as close as possible to the originals.

Various artists worked on the decoration of the new church of the Eremitani: Pietro and Giuliano da Rimini, who in 1324 produced a, now lost, altarpiece; Guariento di Arpo, who is recorded as working here by 1338, on the frescoes in the second chapel on the south wall (then The Chapel of St. Anthony Abbott, now the Chapel of St. Anthony of Padua), and in the period 1361-1365 on the cycle in the presbytery and apse (the Great Chapel); Giusto de' Menabuoi, who in 1370 was commissioned by Traversina Cortellieri to decorate a chapel that took the family name and was intended to celebrate the memory of Tebaldo Cortellieri, a famous jurist and intellectual at the service of Francesco 'Il Vecchio' da Carrara.

In the fifteenth century another prestigious artist would be called to work in the church: Andrea Mantegna, who painted the fresco cycle in the Ovetari Chapel (1448-1457), which was unfortunately severely damaged in a Second World War bombing raid on 11 March 1944. The superb *Coronation of the Virgin* (1380) that Altichiero da Zevio painted in the Dotto family Chapel within the Church of the Eremitani was totally destroyed during the war.

2.b.2 Palazzo della Ragione, Carraresi Palace, Baptistery and associated Piazzas

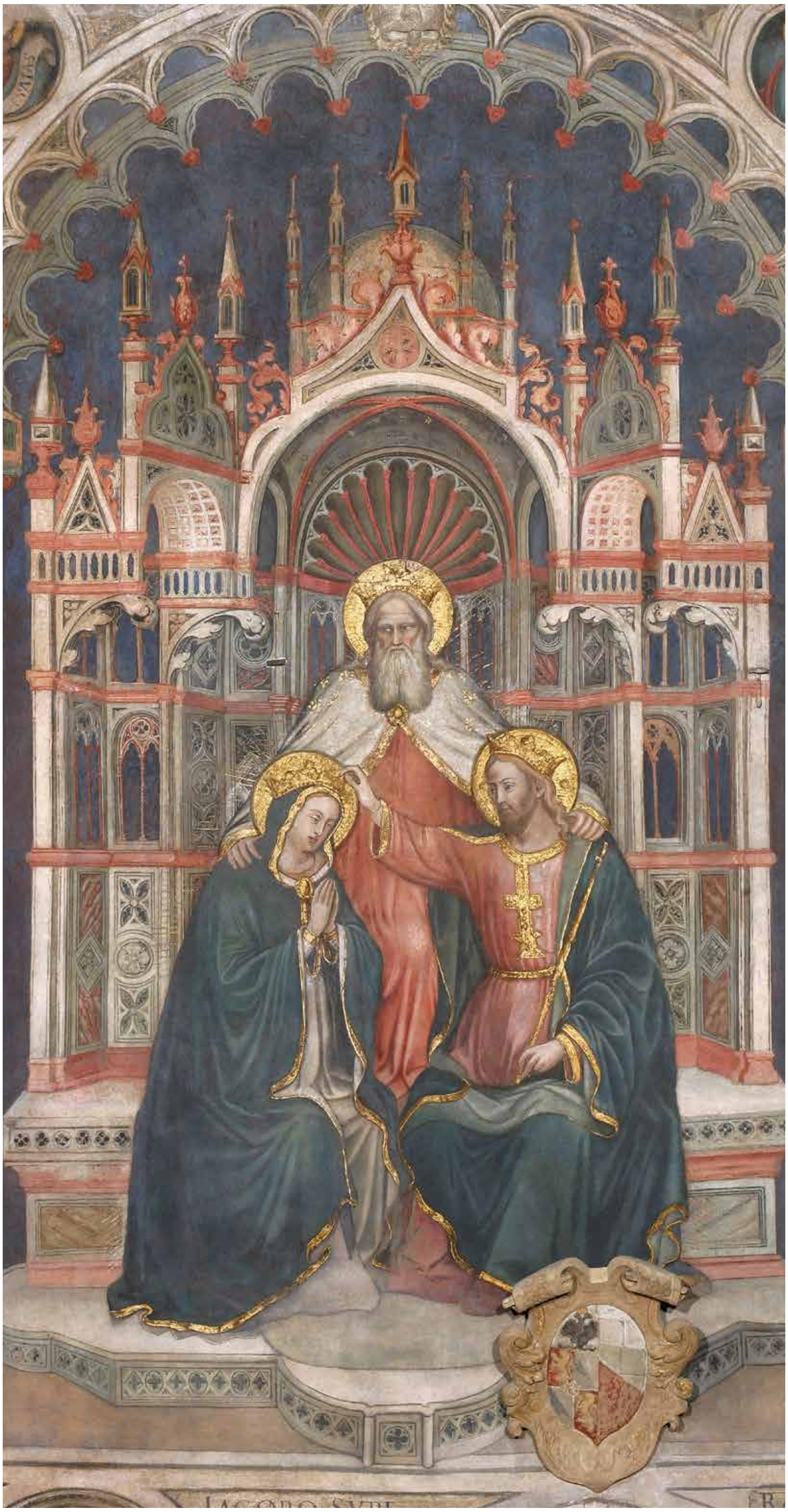
Palazzo della Ragione



Ill. 73, Palazzo della Ragione, interior

The history of the building and subsequent conservation of the Palazzo della Ragione is closely bound up with that of the fresco cycles that decorate its interior. The construction work was carried out in 1218-1219, when Giovanni Rusconi was *podestà* of the Commune, and was intended to provide an adequate meeting-place for public assemblies and the administration of justice. It was complemented by a complex series of other structures serving the commune, of which all that remains is the Palazzo degli Anziani, the Palazzo del Consiglio and remnants of the Palazzo del Podestà. Evidence shows that the building completed by 1219 was lower than that we see nowadays and had a pitched wooden roof supported by wooden roof trusses resting on leather-clad columns. The upper floor was divided into various rooms by wooden structures designed to house the desks and benches of the various tribunals.

The first decoration of the interior did not begin until 1271, when the then *podestà*, Tommaso Giustiniani, had the space above each tribunal bench (the building would house up to seventeen) painted with its respective mark of



Ill. 74, Gothic painter close to circle of Altichiero da Zevio, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, Palazzo della Ragione

office, most of which were animal symbols. Then, in 1306-1309, the overall appearance of the building was changed by Fra Giovanni degli Eremitani, famous for various hydraulic projects and architectural works within the Padua area (including the *Fondaco delle Biade*/Fodder Exchange and the Church of the

Eremitani itself). In making the building the central feature of the various palazzi that had risen around the piazza during the later part of the thirteenth century, he raised it higher and remodelled the roof (an exposed wooden structure in the interior covered on the outside with lead sheeting). This work made the first floor into an enormous hall that was divided into various spaces which included a chapel dedicated to St. Prosdocimus, a tax collector's office, a prison and the various tribunals and law courts - all under a vast keel roof. Around 1309 Fra Giovanni would then work on the external loggias, which probably served not only a decorative function but were also intended as buttresses to withstand the outward thrust from the new roof; in addition, they provided much more space for shops and workshops. The most innovative feature of this new addition was the decision to use blocks of stone instead of brick (then the dominant building material). This made the structure much more monumental and heightened the visual impact of the porticoed arcades; these latter were a feature that was very common in northern Italy because they provided space for markets that was protected from the elements. Various scholars have argued that the use of stone throughout the arcades was inspired by the extant remains of the Roman arena near the Monastery of the Eremitani.

Much of the above-cited information comes from *Visio Egidii regis Pataviae*; a text drawn up by the notary Giovanni da Nono in the years 1314-1318, this is a key source with regard to the urban layout of Padua at the beginning of the fourteenth century. We also have a visual depiction of the Palazzo, complete with lead roofing and loggia supported by wooden roof trusses, in the fresco that Giusto de' Menabuoi painted in the Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi in the Basilica of St. Anthony (ante 1387).

Giotto would be commissioned to decorate the upper hall of the Palazzo della Ragione during his second period of work in the city (probably in the 1310s). However, this would be completely destroyed when, on 2 February 1420, a fire which started in a cordage storeroom in the mezzanine devastated the loggias, the wooden roof and the fresco decoration. The subsequent rebuilding work would modify the interior by getting rid of the mezzanine space but would not make substantial changes to the exterior, except for the fact that loggias now had vaulted ceilings. So what one sees nowadays could largely correspond to Fra Giovanni's original design. Unfortunately, the structure would also fall victim to a summer whirlwind (on 17 August 1756) which caused a large part of the roof and the northern loggia to collapse. On that occasion, too, reconstruction was prompt, as was the restoration of the pictorial decoration (by Francesco Zannoni, in the years 1759-1763). Soon afterwards, with the fall of the Venetian Republic in 1797, the Palazzo ceased to be used as a courthouse. It has recently undergone complete restoration of both the interior decoration and the architectural structure (consolidation of the building and loggias, refacing of the roof).

Contemporary records talk of huge astrological frescoes decorating the Palazzo, complete with signs of the zodiac, planets and constellations. This subject-matter was again taken up in the work after the terrible fire of 1420, resulting in an imposing cycle of frescoes; inspired by judicial astrology, these depicted the influence of planets and stars upon human affairs and human disputes. In the Palazzo della Ragione, Giotto's exploration of the theme of astrology reflects both contemporary ideas and the use for which this building was intended. However, we do not know if the original decoration covered the walls alone, or both the walls and the ceiling, or even just the latter. Whatever the case, from the point of view of both iconography and pictorial handling of the subject-matter, this work was an innovation that stood as a model for such images well into the second half of the fourteenth century.

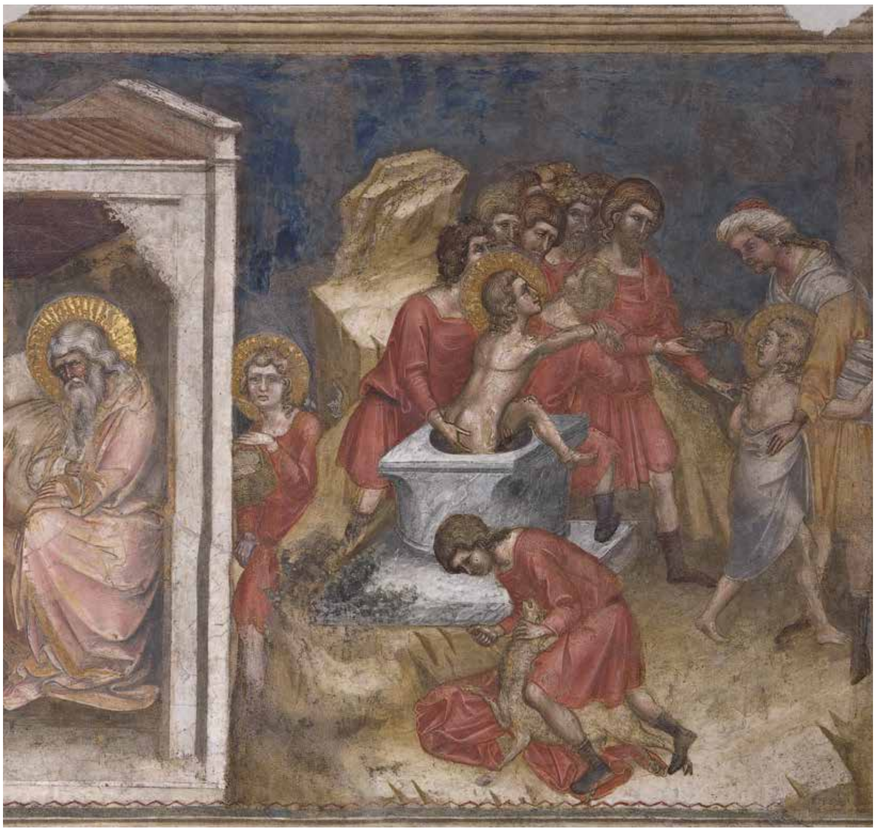
The fresco cycle in the Palazzo della Ragione is a good illustration of how an iconographical model which had originally been religious in intent might be adapted to secular use. Giotto's *The Last Judgement* had depicted the meting-out of divine justice, but now his concern was earthly justice: all aspects of a city's juridical and administrative apparatus were covered in his decoration of spaces that housed not only public assemblies but also the courts which heard civil and penal cases. And given the great importance the city had attributed to this, subsequently lost, work - yet another example how contemporaries recognized Giotto's artistic excellence - the thematic content of this decorative scheme would be taken up by other artists during the course of the fifteenth century.

We have already mentioned how Fra' Giovanni transformed this building into a "centre of justice and trade", and another figure to be mentioned here is Pietro d'Abano; a physician, philosopher and astrologist, he worked upon the iconography of the cycle, his contribution providing further evidence of the links between Giotto and the learned circles active at the University of Padua. Nor should one overlook the fact that Pietro d'Abano's work should be seen in relation to that of Michele Scoto, an important astrologist at the courts of king Federico II and king Alfonso, whose miniatures may have been produced in Spain but reveal clear links with the iconography in Giotto's work. These interconnections demonstrate how knowledge and artistic developments might cross national borders thanks to links between individual courts and the fact that, despite the difficulties of contemporary travel, artists and craftsmen moved between one workshop and another. Even more important than the movement of individuals was that of illuminated manuscripts and codices, which meant that work became known far beyond the environment in which it was created. Within Padua itself one sees an example of such cultural interchange over the distance of centuries, with the remains of the Roman Arena in the area near the Scrovegni Chapel probably serving as the inspiration for the decision to build the new loggias of the Palazzo della Ragione (c.1309) in stone rather than brick. Those who worked on the restoration of the cycle included Niccolò Miretto, Stefano da Ferrara and various assistants, amongst whom recent scholars have identified Antonio di Pietro, a nephew of Altichiero. However, the fact that their work was exclusively in fresco does not resolve the issue as to whether Giotto's original was in this medium, on painted panels or a mixture of both. What makes the cycle as it exists today so important is that those re-doing the decoration were explicitly requested to be faithful to the original both in iconography and in style. And though nowadays we might have some difficulty in understanding the fresco cycle, at the time this will not have been the case, given that it was a clear reflection of the principles that were supposed to be the basis of civic life. For the people of the day, the administration of justice was not simply a matter of applying laws; it also involved an evaluation of the influence the planets and stars might have upon the human psyche and human behaviour.

We have no exact knowledge of the relationship between Giotto and Pietro d'Abano, but it seems highly likely that they knew each other personally: the latter, a man-of-letters who taught at the university had, for example, praised the Florentine master in his writings. What we do know is that the city and university continued to be home to such figures as Giovanni Dondi, a physician, astronomer, philosopher and poet; therefore, it is highly probable that studies of the heavens continued to influence the work of artists active in the second half of the fourteenth century. Dondi, for example, was the creator of the famous *Astrario*, a marvellous astronomical clock that could reproduce the motions of the sun, the moon and the five major planets, as well as measuring time to a fraction of a minute.

Recent studies have also stressed the link between Giotto's cycle and the miniatures in various codices, including the above-mentioned work by Michele Scoto, astrologer to the court of Frederick II, (now in Munich) and the illuminated manuscript produced in Spain for the court of King Alfonso (now in the Vatican Library). It has been shown that certain fifteenth-century images seem to draw directly on those generated by the high level of interest in astrology, which was typical of Alfonso's court. Probably, while he was in Paris at the end of the thirteenth century, Pietro d'Abano himself had come into contact with such cultural circles.

Chapel of the Carraresi Palace



Ill. 75, Guariento, *Joseph lowered into the Well and then sold to the Merchants of Madian*, Chapel of the Carraresi Palace (detail)

The small chapel intended for the personal use of the Da Carrara family once had a rectangular floor plan and stood on the west side of the first floor in the palace. Contemporary sources and extant material indicate that the interior of the palace was entirely decorated with frescoes; however, due to the various vicissitudes through which the building has passed, little of these decorative cycles survive. After the city fell under Venetian control in 1405, the palace became the seat of the various bodies of Venetian government, and gradual neglect would result in the building's decline, with the ultimate destruction of a large part of the structure.

Lord of Padua from 1338 to 1345, Ubertino da Carrara was the one who initiated work on this residence, on a site in the west of the city that was bound to the east by the Strada Maggiore, to the south by the Contrada del Duomo, to the north by the church of San Nicolò and to the west by the river. The first nucleus of the complex, known as the Palazzo Vecchio, or the Palazzo di Ponente (West Palace), was completed in 1343, with work on the Palazzo Nuovo or Palazzo di Levante (East Palace) beginning under Ubertino but being completed under Francesco 'Il Vecchio' da Carrara.

All that remains of the old structure is the part between Via Accademia and Via Tadi, the most architecturally significant portion of which is the fourteenth-century double loggia. The hall within this became the premises of the Accademia Galileiana in 1779, and it was then that the south wall of the Chapel was demolished to create a large space for the meetings of the Academicians. Other work then involved the demolition of the so-called *Traghetto*, a raised walkway some nine metres high and three metres wide that ran on 28 arches from the Palace to the Casa della Rampa (Rampway House) and then to the north of the Porta Tadi city gateway, forming a link between the city walls, the castle and the Torlonga (nowadays known as *La Specola* and home to the Astronomical Observatory). Dominating the entire space around it, this *traghetto* was designed to give rapid, unobstructed access to the castle in cases of necessity.

Restoration work, in the 1970s and 1990s, conserved all that remained of the architectural complex and of the fourteenth-century decorations. Historical documents say that the building had not only non-figurative decorations on the ground floor but also some rooms with figurative decoration. For example, there is record of the court rooms being decorated with images of animals and narrative scenes inspired by the *History of Thebes*, and episodes associated with *Nero, Hercules, Camillus and Lucretia*. The most significant space was the *Sala degli Uomini Illustri* (Hall of Illustrious Men) which is mentioned in 1382, and in 1390 was still being referred to as the 'new hall'. The subject-matter there can be seen in relation to *De viri illustribus*, which Francesco Petrarch was then writing in Padua itself. Unfortunately, nothing remains of these extraordinary works, which illustrated the particular character of cultural influences in late-fourteenth-century Padua, where the example of classical antiquity was already making itself felt. Similarly, no extant document makes it possible to attribute any particular cycle to any particular painter, with the one exception of the Chapel, where we know the decorations are by Guariento. Savonarola, for example, mentions Altichiero da Zevio, Jacopo Avanzi and a certain Ottaviano da Brescia as artists active at the Carraresi court, but he does not specify where they worked.

The first recorded attribution of the frescoes and panel paintings in the Chapel to Guariento comes in the second edition of Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*; Marcantonio Michiel (1521-1543) would argue that some of the work was by Jacopo Avanzi, but recent scholars have been unanimous in attributing the whole of the decorative cycle to Guariento. Born in Padua - though some say in Piove di Sacco - Guariento was an artist who had already produced one of his most fascinating panel paintings for the city's Duomo, a polyptych which is now in the collection of the Norton Simon Foundation (USA); he appears with a certain regularity in local documents from 1338 onwards. The artist was, therefore, familiar both with the works of Giotto and those of Pietro and Giuliano da Rimini, considered the most faithful of Giotto's pupils and artists who worked within the Church of the Eremitani from 1324 onwards. Guariento must have entered Carraresi circles quite early in his career, given that in 1351 he painted the frescoes on the walls of the apse in the Paduan church of Sant'Agostino, which housed the tombs of Jacopo and Ubertino da Carrara; works of great quality by the Venetian sculptor Andriolo de Santi, these had been commissioned by Francesco 'Il Vecchio' da Carrara and are now located in the Church of the Eremitani.

Probably the painter received the commission for the decorative cycle in the Palace Chapel before 1354, the year in which Charles IV, king of Bohemia and future emperor, visited Padua. Comparison with earlier works - for example, the *Crucifix* now in the Musei Civici of Bassano del Grappa (originally painted for the church of San Francesco in that town) and the Piove di Sacco *Polyptych* of 1344, reveals many innovations in the artistic language used in both the frescoes and panel paintings decorating the chapel. There is also evidence of such innovations in the few extant remnants of the work in the church of Sant'Agostino.

The decoration of the chapel in the Carraresi Palace shows Guariento occupying an ideal point of transition between the work of Giotto and that of Giusto de' Menabuoi. In fact, whilst the work of the Tuscan master was undoubtedly one of his initial benchmarks, Guariento would also work with the latter, at the church of the Eremitani. He can therefore be seen as a conduit between the tradition of fresco painting established by Giotto and the International Gothic style, an aspect of his work which is very clear in what he produced during his period in Venice.

That this was a court commission meant that Guariento could take even further that "secularisation of sacred history" which had begun with Giotto's work in the Scrovegni Chapel. There is, in fact, a clear interweaving of both religious motifs and the celebration of secular power, and once again scenes of religious narrative unfold within a setting of fourteenth-century architecture, in a world instantly recognizable to the artist's contemporaries. Dressed in the fashions of the day, the figures depicted are shown participating in what are treated as chronicles of present-day events.

The Carraresi Lords of Padua

Jacopo I, first lord of Padua, from 25 July 1318 to 4 November 1319. He maintained control of the city, even if he entrusted the formal title of 'Lord' first to Enrico II di Gorizia and then, in 1321, to Enrico di Carinizia and Tiroli. He died on 22 November 1324.

Marsilio, effective lord of Padua from 1324 to 1328, even if he too entrusted the formal title to Enrico di Carinzia e Tirolo. After power in the city had been ceded to Cangrande I della Scala in 1328, he would remain as the Scaliger governor of Padua until 1337. Under the protection of Venice and Florence, he once more became lord of Padua in the final year of his life, and died on 21 March 1338.

Ubertino I, lord of Padua from 1338 to 1345; he died in 29 March 1345.

Marsilietto Papafava, lord of Padua from March 1345 to his death in May of that year.

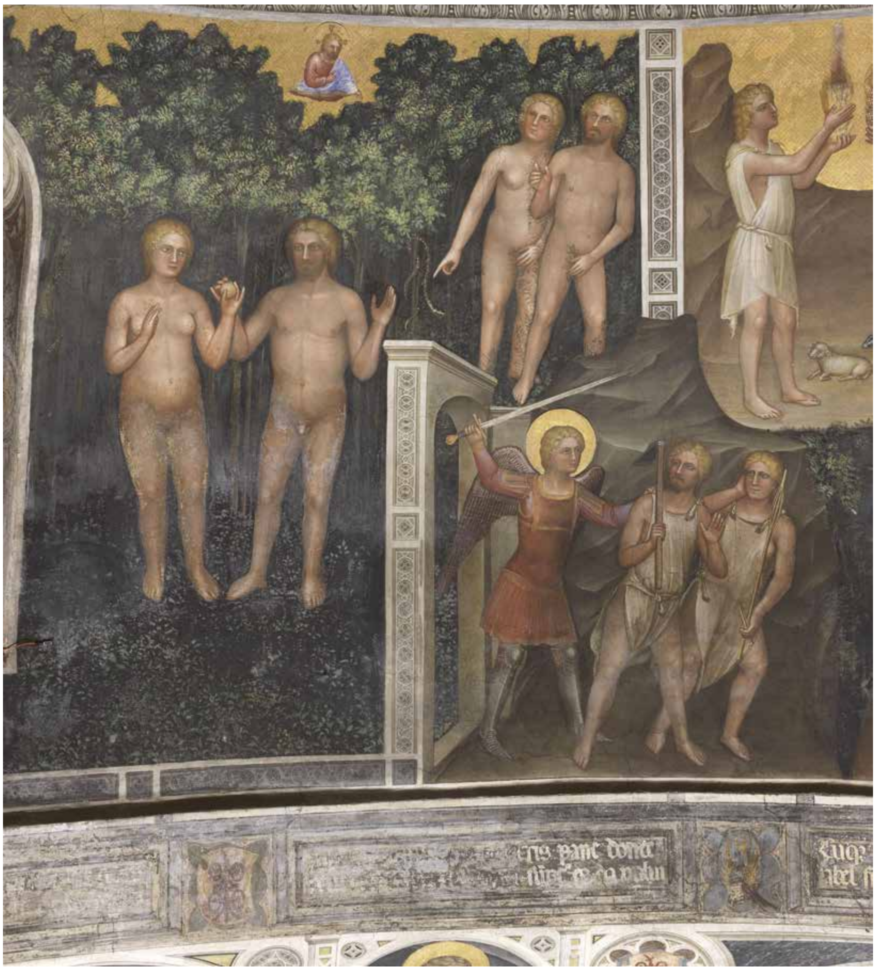
Jacopo II, lord of Padua from 1345 to his death on 19 December 1350.

Jacopino, lord of Padua from 1350 to 1355, together with Francesco I; he died in prison in 1372.

Francesco I, lord of Padua from 1350 to 1388; he died in prison in Monza on 6 October1393.

Francesco Novello, lord of Padua from June 1388 to February 1389 and then from September 1390 to November 1405. The final Carraresi lord of the city, he died a prisoner in Venice on 19 January 1406.

Cathedral Baptistery



Ill. 76, Giusto de' Menabuoi, *Original Sin*, Cathedral Baptistery (detail)

Dedicated to St. John the Baptist, the Cathedral Baptistery was consecrated by the Patriarch of Grado in 1281. Around the middle of the fourteenth century it underwent some architectural modification and then, thanks to commissions by the wife of Francesco 'Il Vecchio' da Carrara, then lord of the city, it was entirely decorated with frescoes by Giusto de' Menabuoi. That commission from Fina Buzzaccarini probably came in 1375-76 and, given that she died in 1378, scholars have concluded that the work must have been completed by that date. A refined and cultured woman, the patron also had a tomb for herself and her husband created within the baptistery; so as well as serving a sacramental function, the structure became the third Carraresi mausoleum in the city, after the churches of Santo Stefano and Sant'Agostino. The building was the place where each citizen of Padua was baptised into the community of the Christian church, and the association enabled the Carraresi to re-assert their power as the embodiment of that community; the co-existence of family tomb and city baptismal font underlined an inextricable bond between the Carraresi and Padua. This symbolic reading is also reflected in the iconography of the Menabuoi frescoes, one of the greatest masterpieces of fourteenth-century

Italian painting. Indeed, the very location of the work served to reinforce the idea that the beauty of the city was a fruit of Carraresi power: the magnificent Carraresi Palace stood nearby, on a site that ran from Piazza dei Signori to the present-day Via Accademia and Via Arco Valaresso.

A Florentine, Giusto de' Menabuoi was probably born in the 1320s. He received his first training as an artist in Visconti-ruled Milan, within an atmosphere that was permeated by the influence of Giotto; that artist had spent the last years of his life in Milan, a fact which inevitably promoted interaction between the artistic cultures of Tuscany and Lombardy.

Menabuoi probably arrived in Padua in 1368-1370, the period of Guariento's death, and soon became the preferred artist of the Carraresi court. Amongst his first commissions in the city was that from Traversina Cortellieri to paint a cycle of frescoes in the Eremitani funeral chapel of her son, Tebaldio, who had died young while on a diplomatic mission for the Carraresi court. Thus two of the major commissions Menabuoi received in Padua were from women, something that was far from usual in fourteenth-century Italy. It was even less common for the commission for a family mausoleum to come from a woman.

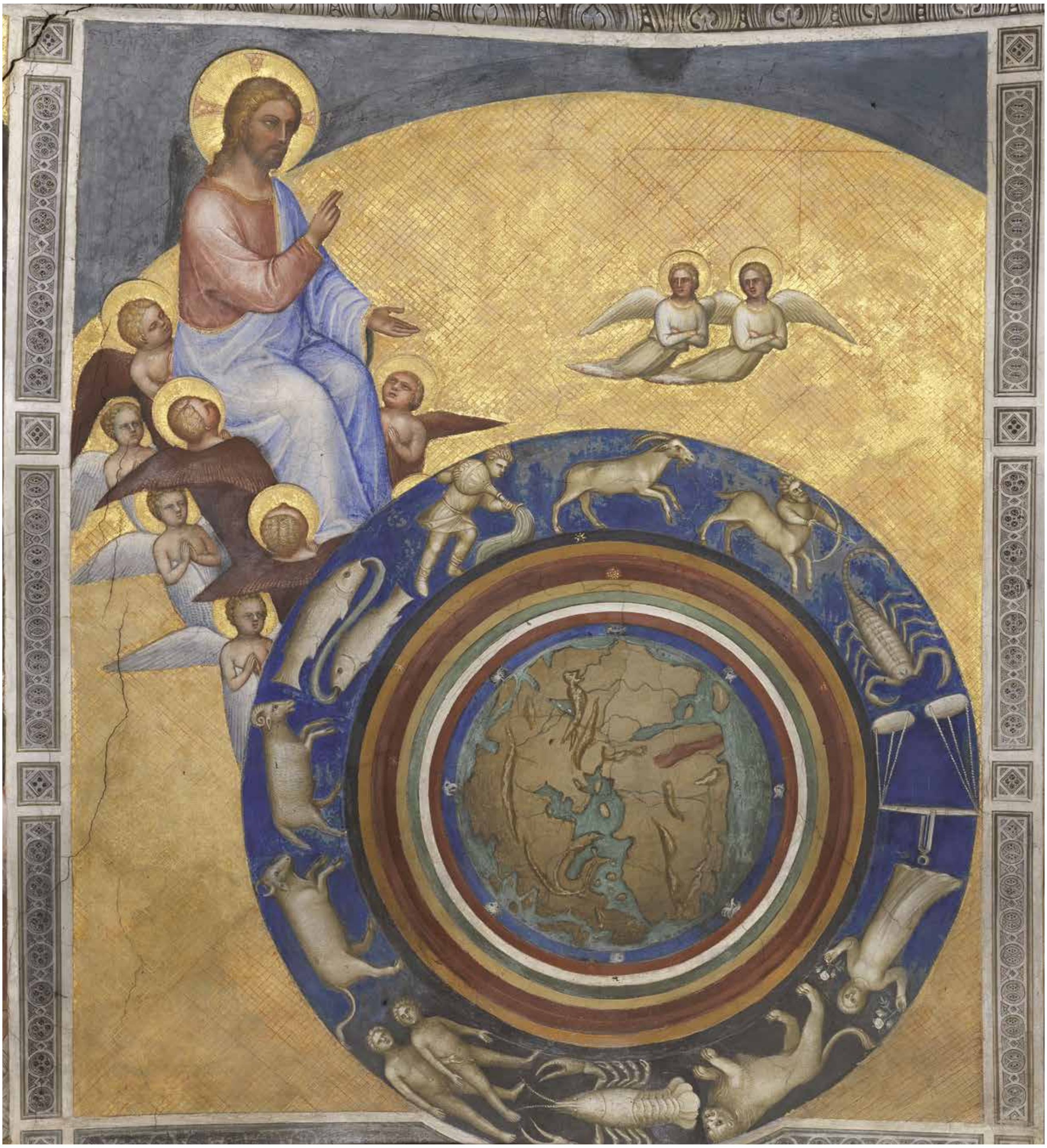
Today, entrance to the baptistery is via a small portico that was added later in the fourteenth century (what one sees now is a replacement for the original, destroyed in the Second World War). However, in Menabuoi's time, access was via the west wall of the building, through a doorway surmounted by an acrosolium tomb; the work of the sculptor Andriolo de Santi, this too was commissioned by Fina Buzzaccarini. The position was no accident - all citizens entering had to pass under the tomb and were thus reminded of those who were the Lords of Padua; nor is it an accident that the tomb was destroyed after the Carraresi were defeated by Venice in 1405. Nevertheless, in spite of this attempt to eradicate the very memory of the previous lords of the city, a clear memorial to Fina Buzzaccarini remains within the Baptistery frescoes, where she herself is portrayed in various scenes.

The continuity between Giotto and Giusto de' Menabuoi is to be seen not only in the common religious themes they depicted but also in the "atmosphere" they create within these two religious buildings. In both cases, the visitor becomes part of events that unfold around him, with figures from the gospel narrative depicted alongside contemporary aristocrats, artists and intellectuals. As already mentioned, one of these latter was Francesco Petrarch, who in those very years was introducing his Paduan friends to a text by Vitruvius that may well have been drawn upon by Menabuoi himself in his pictorial compositions. With regard to such influences, one should also point out that in the years 1382-1385 Padua was also home to Biagio Pelacani da Parma, whose studies of perspective would be of exceptional importance for no less a figure than

Filippo Brunelleschi. Whilst no direct link with Giusto can be established, the presence of such a man teaching in the city gives one some idea of the cultural atmosphere in the Padua of the day.

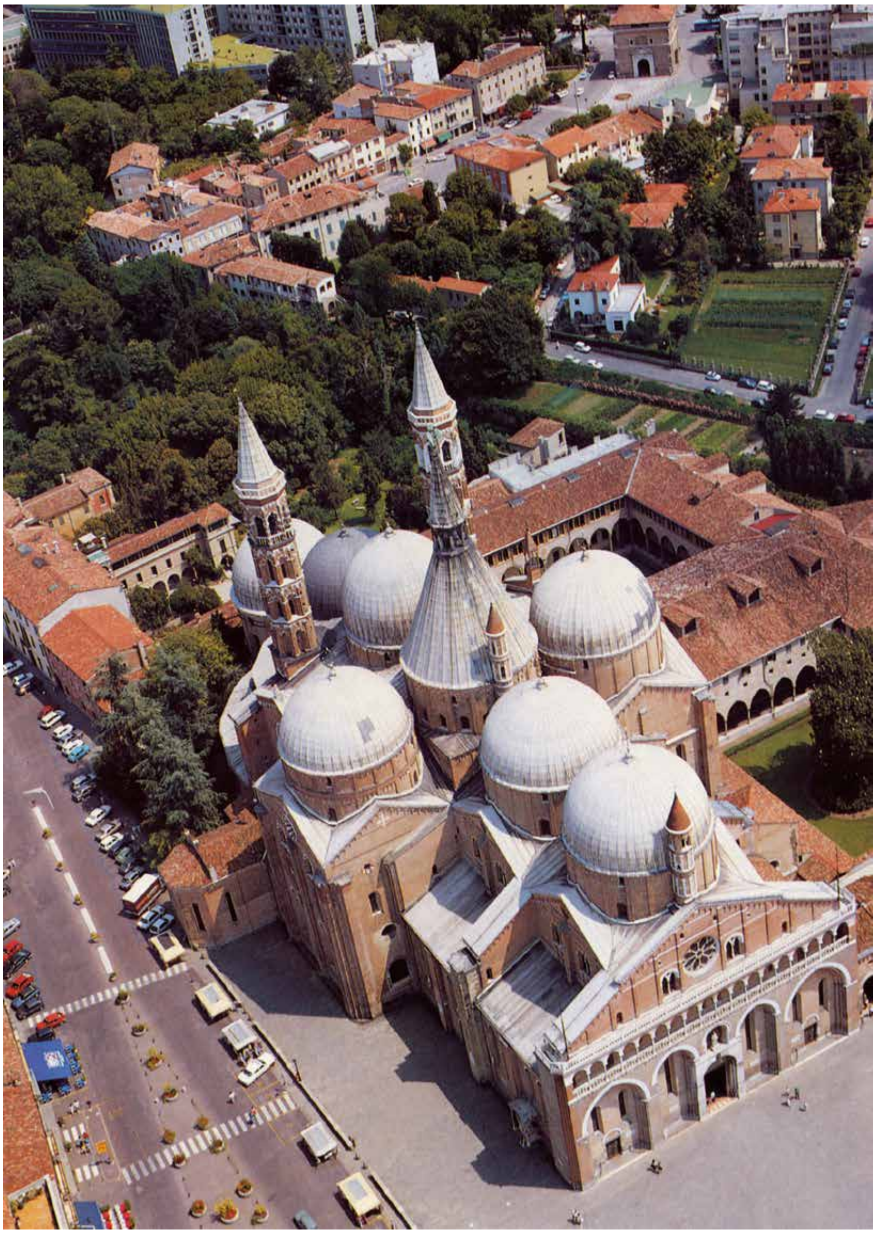
Located in the heart of the city's religious life, the work on the interior of the Baptistery marked the definite consolidation of the tradition of fresco painting in Padua. For art historian and layman alike, the paintings here seem to re-interpret the frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel in a new key - a key influenced by the refinements of the International Gothic style that, thanks to Guariento and then Menabuoi himself, would be a feature of the work produced for the Carraresi court.

Ill. 77, Giusto de' Menabuoi, *The Creation of the World*, Cathedral Baptistery (detail)



2.b.3 Buildings associated with the Basilica of St. Anthony

Basilica and Monastery of St. Anthony of Padua



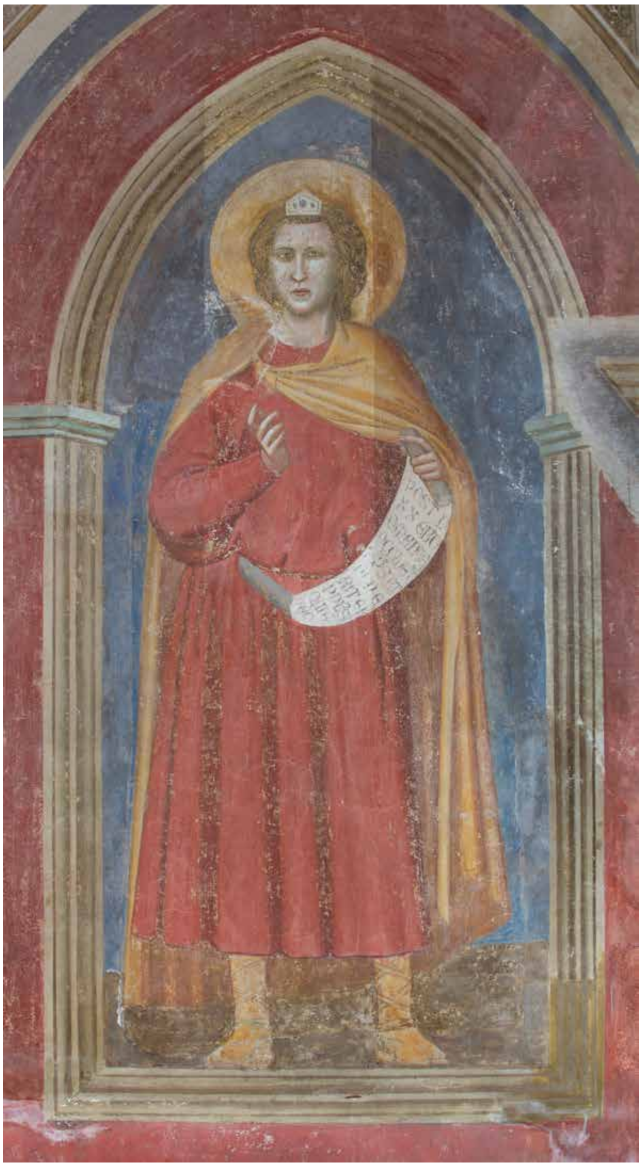
Ill. 78, Basilica of St. Anthony, exterior

Work on the Basilica - intended to house the tomb of St. Anthony, who had died in the city in 1231 - began in 1232 on the site, which, as early as 1110, had been home to a church dedicated to the Virgin; this structure was later incorporated into the Basilica, becoming the Chapel of the Black Madonna. By 1229, the site alongside that small church had become the location of a monastery, which was probably founded by St. Anthony himself.

Scholars have long studied the complex history of the basilica and monastery, both with regard to the different phases of building work and the various cycles of pictorial and sculptural decoration the structures have become home to over the centuries. As far as the construction work is concerned, it should be noted that we have little data with regard to the earliest phase, and none of that information can be taken as offering a certain point of reference. Unfortunately, the account books for the work in the thirteenth and fourteenth century have not survived, so that scholars have to rely on what they can deduce from: the building itself; the documents relating to donations or other transactions involving the Basilica; the known dates when the body of St. Anthony was moved (8 April 1263; 14 June 1310; 15 March 1350), each of those occasions being associated with particular phases in the building work. Another source of information is the text *Visio Egidii regis Pataviae*, which was written by the notary Giovanni da Nono and can be dated to the period 1314-1318.

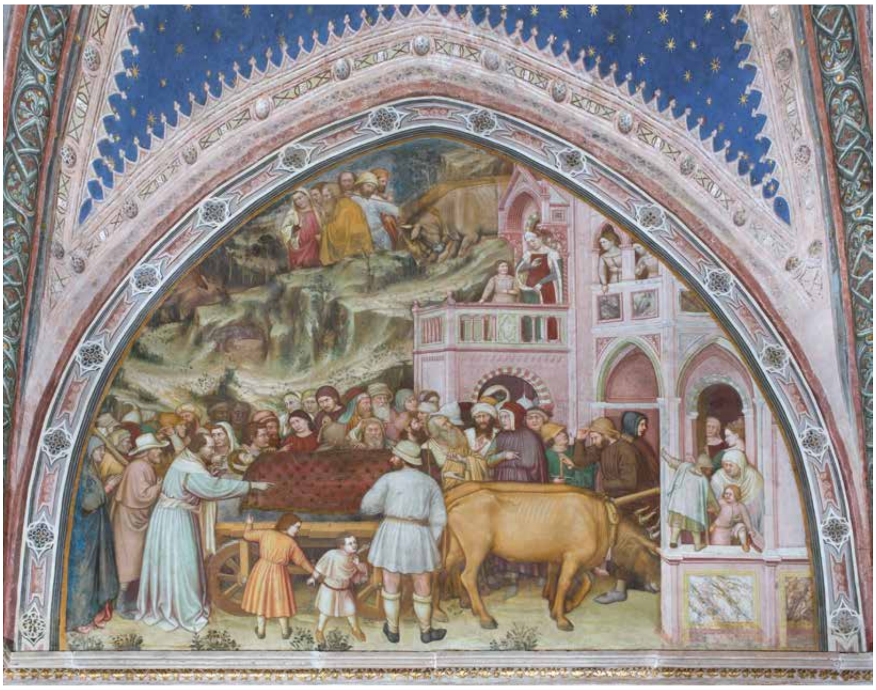
In looking at the main hypotheses with regard to the different phases in construction, one should start with the building that formed the core of the complex: the small church of Santa Maria Mater Domini. The centre of Franciscan activity in the city, this housed the tomb of St. Anthony from 1231 to 1263 and very probably stood on the same site as the Chapel of the Black Madonna, which still contains what is likely to be the earliest extant evidence of Giotto's work as a fresco artist in Padua. Given the number of faithful who visited that tomb, the small church quickly proved inadequate and work began on a larger structure. With regard to this, scholars argue two different theories: that this larger edifice was the fruit of a single project, or that it came about as the result of three, increasingly ambitious, projects whose chronological sequence can be understood thanks to the dates when the saint's body was moved. For a more detailed account of this debate, see the bibliography. What is important to note here is that the final basilica is a very complex structure through which runs a series of internal and external wall corridors and passageways that reach all parts of the building; access to these is via staircases to the left of the entrance to the cloisters.

From the very beginning, the Friars Minor and the main noble families of the city were involved in projects for the decoration of the interior. As already mentioned, it was perhaps the friars who called Giotto to the city at the beginning of the fourteenth century to work on parts of the complex (the Chapel of the Black Madonna and the Chapter Hall), whilst the frescoes in the Benediction Chapel (also known as the St. Catherine Chapel) were the



Ill. 79, Giotto, *The Prophet Daniel*, Chapter Hall, Basilica of St. Anthony result of a commission from the Scrovegni family; of this latter project, all that remains are some busts of female saints on the entrance intrados and a few fragments on the walls.

As for the St. James Chapel (also known as the Chapel of St. James and St. Felix), both its construction and decoration were commissioned by the *marchese* Bonifacio Lupi di Soragna, a member of a family with very close links to the Carraresi court. His goal was to create a place of burial that befitted the outstanding rank his family had achieved from the mid-fourteenth century onwards thanks to their military and diplomatic services to the lords of the city. The chapel itself was commissioned from some of the most important artistic figures then working in Padua: the Venetian sculptor Andriolo de Santi and the artists Altichiero da Zevio and Jacopo Avanzi. The former had already distinguished himself around the year 1350 thanks to his work in the Padua church of Sant'Agostino on the tombs of Ubertino and Jacopo da Carrara. In 1372 a detailed contract for his work on the St. James Chapel was drawn up by Lombardo della Seta, secretary to Francesco Petrarch. The terms of that document reveal Bonifacio's determination that the project should be carried out in a rapid and coherent manner; indeed, the chapel was consecrated just four years later. While there are no extant contracts for the two artists involved in the decoration of the interior, two documents (dated 1377 and 1379) record the costs of lowering the scaffolding used during the work, and (in the later contract) the balance for the entire work payable to Altichiero alone (probably due to the fact that Avanzi had died). Both artists had arrived in Padua around 1370 to work on interiors of the Carraresi Palace; however, none of their frescoes there survive, so this chapel is the sole evidence of the fruits of their collaboration.



Ill. 80, Altichiero da Zevio, *The Miracle of the Untamed Bulls and the Arrival of the Saint's body at the Castle of Queen Lupa*, Chapel of St. James, Basilica of St. Anthony

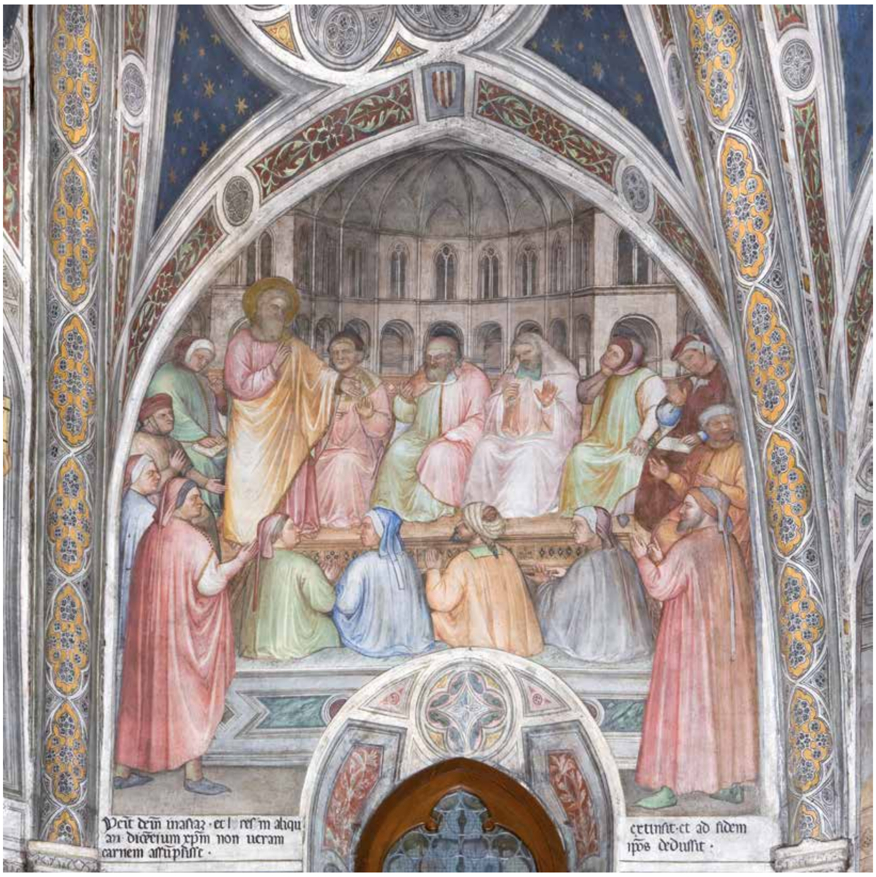
Altichiero had been born in Zevio around 1330, and though his initial influence was the Giotto-influenced art of Lombardy, his main training as an artist came in Verona and Padua; in the latter city he would, for example, paint the lunette in the Dotto Chapel (structure completed in 1382) in the Church of the Eremitani. Within the Basilica of St. Anthony, he is also credited with the lunette decoration depicting *Madonna and Child with Saints* which surmounts the tomb of the nobleman Federico Lavellongo. His art reveals the refined and cultivated sensibility of an artist who was fully informed on both advances in painting techniques and the sort of scientific research (particularly in the field of optics) which was then being pursued at the University of Padua. It was thanks to this knowledge that Altichiero could offer a new reading of Giotto's artistic language, developing upon the Tuscan master's skill in creating the illusion of three-dimensional space. His own works are built around very complex yet convincing spatial compositions that hinge upon interaction between real architectural features and the frescoed walls; and within that space there is a harmonious distribution of human figures.

As for Jacopo Avanzi, he was born in Bologna and, as an artist, he would be powerfully influenced by Giotto's work in Padua, both at the Scrovegni Chapel and elsewhere. The characteristic feature of Avanzi's art would be its narrative power, an intensity achieved through the close concatenation of different scenes in which figures were depicted as individuals, their emotions easily recognizable from facial expression and gesture. The pictorial space in Avanzi's work is more open, with solid architectural features serving largely as background - when such background is not provided by extensive landscapes. Clearly, the artist's main interest was in the interaction between groups of figures, rendered with careful attention to glances, expressions and the details of physiognomy.

The last of the fourteenth-century fresco cycles within the Basilica is to be found in the Chapel of Blessed Luca Belludi, which also houses the so-called Arca Vecchia, the sarcophagus which once held the body of St. Anthony and was, in 1285, used as the tomb of Blessed Luca Belludi, a figure who was as dear to the Franciscan monks as he was to those who commissioned the chapel. In fact, the veneration of the tomb, vigorously encouraged by the monks, was by the early fifteenth century on such a scale that the place would become known as "The Chapel of the Blessed Luca".

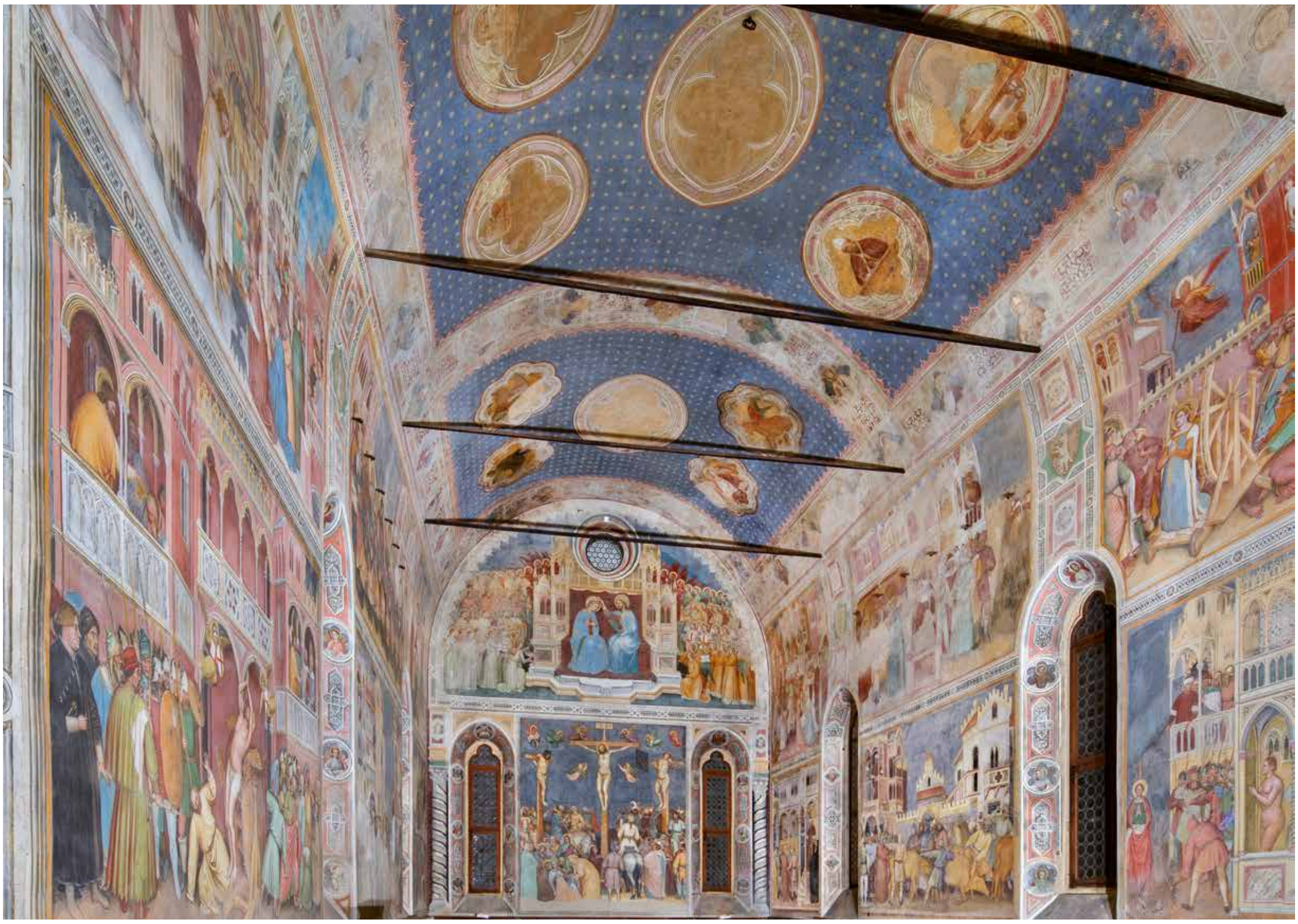
However, the construction of the chapel was more than a mere expression of religious devotion and must be seen in a wider social context. At the time, Francesco 'Il Vecchio' da Carrara was actively promoting the political - and cultural - hegemony of his family, and all the families most closely linked to his court were involved in the achievement of this goal. Amongst these, the Conti family, one of the oldest aristocratic houses in Padua, played a primary role, particularly through the actions of Naimerio and Manfredino Conti, who provided Francesco 'Il Vecchio' with important financial services. It would be those two noblemen who put up the money for this chapel (the date of whose foundation is 1382) and commissioned the frescoes from Giusto de' Menabuoi, an artist whose flowing use of vivid colour generates a hauntingly intimate atmosphere.

Menabuoi had settled in Padua around 1370, and by the time he came to work on the Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi had produced a long series of works in the city; mainly religious in theme, these had largely been commissioned by learned clerics, who had provided the artist with the opportunity to explore complex theological issues. In 1370 we know he was working in the Church of the Eremitani on the *Triumph of St. Augustine* in the Cortellieri Chapel. In the Basilica itself, he would then work on the frescoes for the tomb of Niccolò and Bolzanello da Vigonza, with a *Coronation of the Virgin with Saints, Angels and Donors*, and an *Annunciation* in the lunette of the arcosolium. Before receiving the commission for the Belludi chapel, he had worked on the imposing cycle of frescoes in the Cathedral Baptistery from 1374 to 1378. His frescoes in the Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi may be less refined in atmosphere than those in the Baptistery, but they do open the way to more modern notions of pictorial composition, particularly with regard to the organization of visual space.


Vicit deum inasiaz · et l· res in aliqu
an dicentium xpm non ueram
carnem assumpsisse ·
extinsit · et ad fidem
ipsos deduxit ·

Ill. 81, Giusto de' Menabuoi, *St. Philip Arguing the Faith in Asia Minor*, Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi, Basilica of St. Anthony

Oratory of St. George

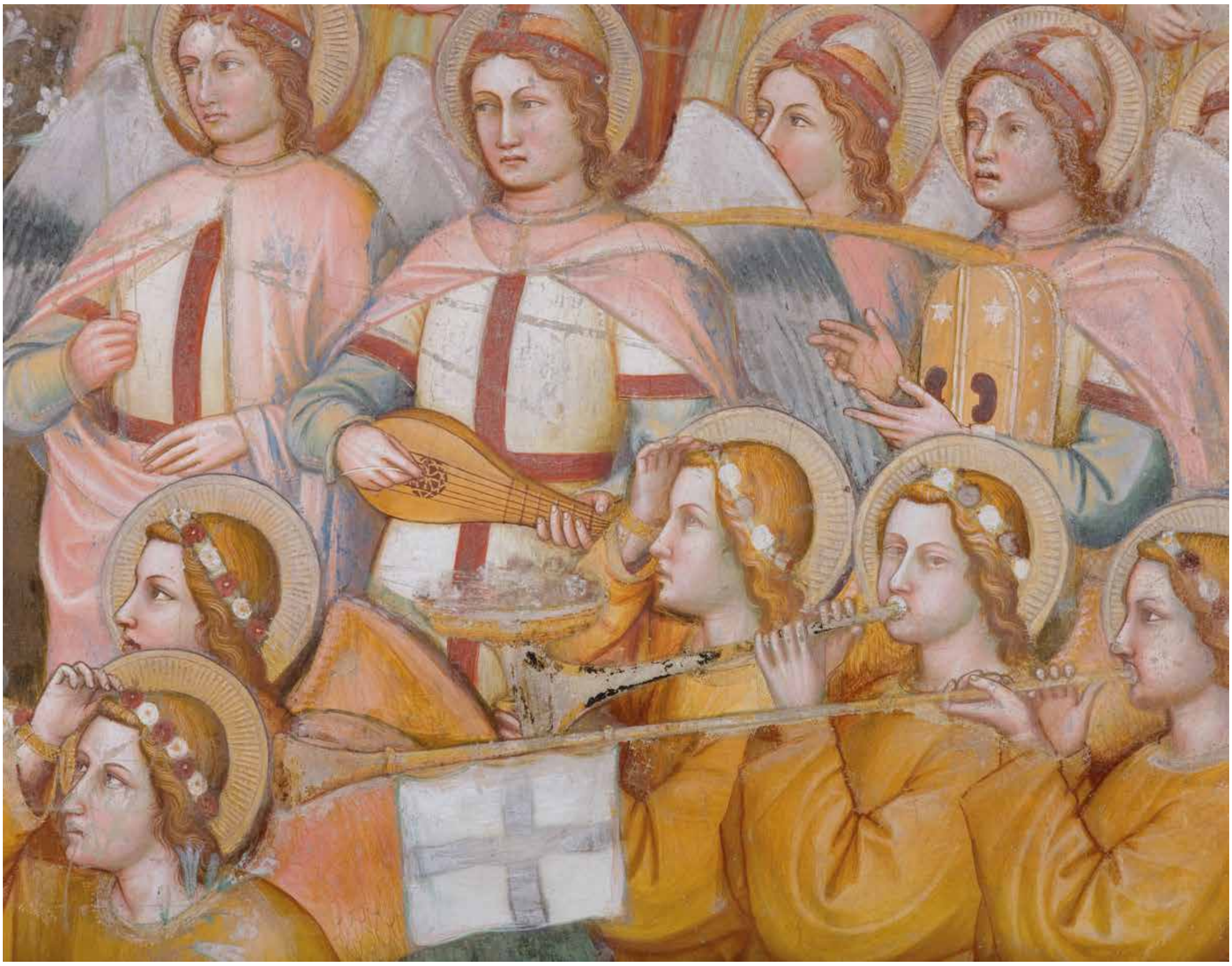


Ill. 82, Oratory of St. George, interior

In 1377 Raimondino Lupi di Soragna had a small private oratory built near the Basilica to house the mortal remains of Bonifacio Lupi di Soragna; that building is now known as the Oratory of St. George. This important project, which came shortly after Bonifacio Lupi di Soragna himself had commissioned the decoration of the St. James Chapel within the Basilica, gives one some idea of the rank the family had achieved in Padua by the late fourteenth century. This was, in fact, a period when the most important families in the city were following the lead set by Enrico Scrovegni at the beginning of the century and commissioning their own fresco-decorated chapels. The Carraresi court of the day saw that the effective exercise of its power over the city and its territory also involved generating consensus of support amongst not only the families that were its allies but also the population as a whole. To this end, the Carraresi had encouraged the arts, the sciences and literature as active vehicles of political propaganda; indeed, they themselves played the foremost role in projects for the embellishment of the city. However, there was also a more individualistic aspect to Raimondino Lupi's commission as well, with his celebration of his family intended to be seen in direct comparison with the chapel Enrico Scrovegni had raised to the memory of his own house. This 'competition' meant there were clear and intended architectural similarities between the two structures. Similarly, the scenes represented and the sculpture of the tomb were taken as opportunities to highlight the military virtues that the Lupi di Soragna family had placed at the service Padua and the Carraresi family.

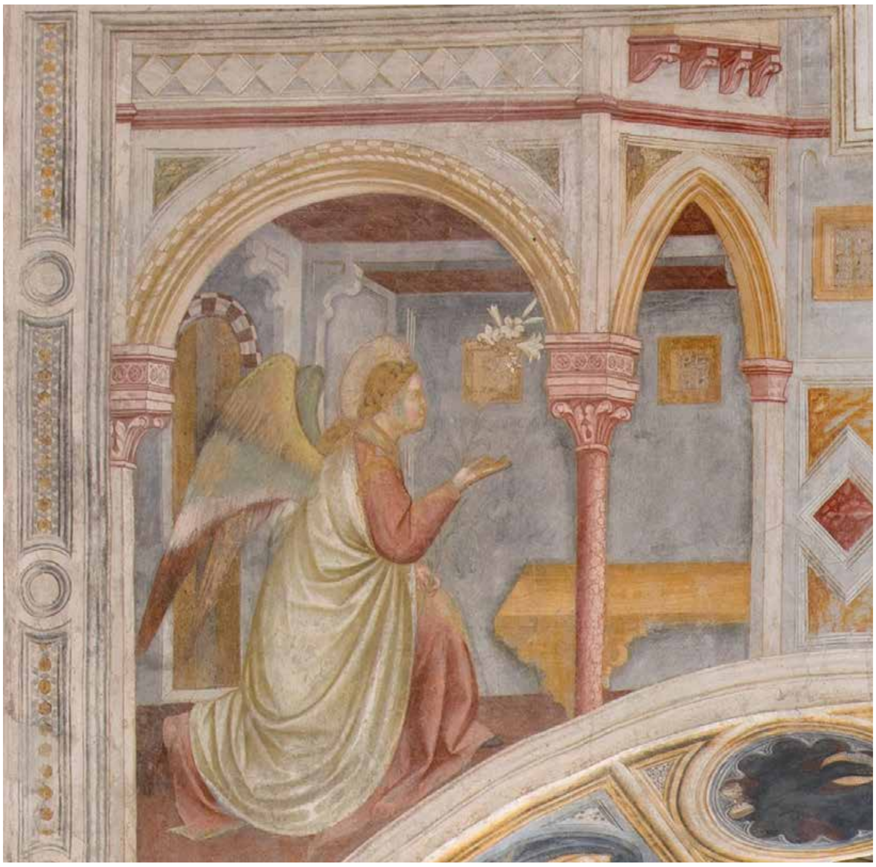
The frescoes were commissioned from Altichiero da Zevio around 1379, the artist already having had contact with the family thanks to his work in the St. James Chapel. Having become established within Padua's cultural and artistic life, Altichiero had continued to develop his skill in the handling of pictorial space, becoming a virtuoso master of the perspective. From his fundamental encounter with the work of Giotto, the artist had drawn themes, ideas and notions of pictorial space that he continued to rework. And in this process, which was never one of mere passive absorption, he could draw upon the deep knowledge of optics which might be acquired from study of the work of the other great artist then active in Padua: Giusto de' Menabuoi, whose marvellous cycle of frescoes in the Cathedral Baptistery will certainly have been known to Altichiero.

Ill. 83, Altichiero da Zevio, *Angel Musicians*, Oratory of St. George (detail)



2.b.4 San Michele

Oratory of St. Michael



Ill. 84, Jacopo da Verona, *The Annunciation*, Oratory of St. Michael (detail)

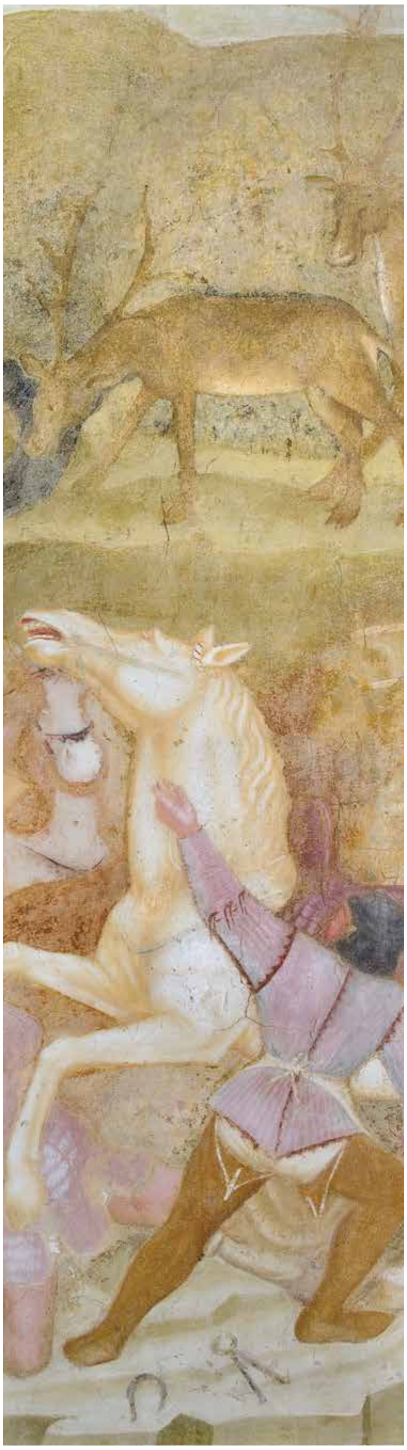
Standing in a small square of the same name, the Oratory of St Michael one sees nowadays has undergone alterations which have radically changed the architectural appearance of a church whose origins are said to date back to a period sometime between the sixth and the second half of the seventh century. Some argue that its foundation could be seen in relation the Byzantine presence in the city (569-602): within the territories linked to the Exarchate of Ravenna, the Byzantine influence resulted in a spread of veneration of the Holy Archangels, and this church could have been an expression of such veneration. Others say that the foundation of the church dates from later, during the Longobard era. Yet whatever the truth, we do know that, up until the middle of the eleventh century, the church was still known as *Ecclesia Sanctorum Archangelorum*.

By the late fourteenth century, the church had come within the da Carrara sphere of influence, and when, in 1390, a fire which broke out during the Visconti forces' siege of the Carraresi Castle badly damaged the building, the Bovi family (in 1397) financed work to extend the church and decorate the interior. As one can see from a stone plaque in the wall before the entrance, the frescoes were the work of Jacopo da Verona, an artist whose presence in Verona is documented in 1388, 1394 and 1404 (according to some scholars he lived until 1442). Initially considered a minor artist, he was often confused with Jacopo Avanzi from Bologna, who settled in Padua around the same period. However, we know that Jacopo da Verona worked with Altichiero da Zevio on the frescoes at the Oratory of St. George, and that he probably came to Padua following that artist. He is also credited with some works now in the Castelvecchio Museum (Verona) and some important illuminated manuscripts. The St. Michael frescoes, however, are the only works that can with certainty be attributed to him alone.

In 1479, the Oratory of St. Michael came under the governance of the Venetian *Congregazione del Santo Spirito* and would remain so for almost two centuries, until that congregation was suppressed by Pope Alexander VII in 1656. This made the oratory the property of the Venetian Republic, which however then auctioned it off to help pay for its war against the Ottoman empire. Ownership thus passed to Girolamo Dolfin, the Patriarch of Aquileia, and thence to various other Venetian families: the Mocenigo, the Soranzo, the Pisani and the Ruzzini. In 1792 the walls were whitewashed and in 1808 the building ceased to function as a parish church; four years later it was totally closed to the public. Then, in 1815, Francesco Pisani, who owned the palazzo alongside it, decided to demolish the oratory, and all that survived was part of the nave and the chapel with the frescoes by Jacopo da Verona.

In one sense, the frescoes here are closely bound up with the history of the technique itself, given that just one year after they were finished, in 1398, the important Tuscan artist Cennino Cennini, a painter at the court of the last Carraresi lord of Padua (Francesco II), would write the very first treatise on different artistic techniques. That work provided future generations with the technical know-how necessary for fresco painting, and thus might be said to have set the seal on the extraordinary history of that medium within Padua.

A fresco attributed to Cennini, detached from its original wall and now part of the collection of the Musei Civici di Padova, was perhaps created for the nave of this church, work on whose fresco decoration continued into the sixteenth century.



Ill. 85, Jacopo da Verona, *The Nativity* and *The Adoration of the Magi* (detail)

The Carraresi Castle

The ancient edifice stood on the site of the castle which had been expanded by Ezzelino II da Romano, imperial governor of the city from 1237 to 1256, as a key part of the defence system provided by the thirteenth-century city walls. The most important extant remnant is the Torlonga, the larger of the two towers in the Castle.

With the fall of the da Romano tyranny over the city, the fortifications were abandoned until the Carraresi became lords of Padua and had the castle rebuilt. It was then that the two towers were painted in the red and white checkered pattern one can see in the view of the city which appears in Giusto de' Menabuoi's 1382 fresco in the Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi within the Basilica (component part 3). The exterior and interior of the Castle were decorated, and restoration over the past decade has revealed various traces of bright red and white within the more concealed parts of the *Specola* (the Astronomical Observatory raised atop the Castle remains).

The Castle was linked to the Carraresi Palace (component part 2) by the *Traghetto*, a raised walkway whose function was to provide safe passage between the centres of military and political power. With the building of the Renaissance city walls, however, and the long period of peace enjoyed under Venetian rule, the Castel Vecchio - as it became known in the eighteenth century - lost its strategic value.

The first direct evidence confirming who built the new fourteenth-century Castle (and when) was unearthed around 1810, with the discovery of a well in the large courtyard that was part of the castle which had been converted for use as a prison in the first years of the nineteenth century. One of the stones lining that well was carved with a date (12 June 1374) and gave the name of the 'illustrious Francesco VII dei Carrara, Prince of Padua' as the person who had had the edifice constructed. In 1990, a second mention of the prince was found in a room on the first floor: under the eighteenth-century plaster, traces of floral decoration were discovered, their floral composition including the initials 'FC' (Francesco da Carrara).

The remains of the Castle were over the years put to various uses, most notably as an astronomical observatory and a prison; this latter use only came to an end after the Second World War. The transformation of the Torlonga into a *Specola* (observatory) meant that the architect, Domenico Cerato, had to restore what in his drawings are described solely as "dilapidated buildings"; and in what became the new accommodation of the resident astronomer the traces of the old mural decorations were whitewashed over. Even the old monumental staircase, which led from the ground floor through a loggia and up to the tower and the west walls of the Castle, had to be modified for structural reasons. However, this work maintained the old route and the small columns supporting the loggia, complete with the frieze containing portrait busts of the Carraresi.

Other precious evidence of the initial decorations was found in another space of the first floor, where a wall painted with parrots was discovered; this must be the room with the parrots which contemporary chronicles mention as being the place where the Lord of Padua dined when residing in the Castle. All evidence of the location of this decorated room had been lost, but now we know for certain that within this defensive structure Francesco da Carrara had artists decorate the public spaces intended as the expression of prestige. On the ground floor of the Casa dell'Astronomo (Astronomer's House) traces were found of floral-motif decoration, which have been partially restored, whilst work on the vaulted ceiling of this space in the tower has brought to light the image of a large wagon (*carro*), an image which figures in the crest of the Carraresi. Another work that had remained intact over time is the *Madonna and Child* located to the north of the tower on the western side of the Carraresi city walls. Recent restoration has confirmed that this fourteenth-century work, which had always remained visible within the rooms of the *Specola*, had not originally been located inside a votive chapel but set in an open-air space at the top of the above-mentioned tower; within that space one can now see such details of military architecture as crenellation and the embrasures through which weapons were fired.